





**LINCOLN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE AND SEMINARY**



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# *The Eldership*

ELDERS  
DEACONS  
DEACONESES  
EVANGELISTS or PREACHERS  
MEMBERS

by  
Herbert E. Winkler  
Author and Publisher  
1950

Printed by  
WILLIAMS PRINTING COMPANY  
Nashville, Tennessee

## A WORD FROM THE VOLUME

GENTLE READER: Please do not throw me away, nor place me upon some dark shelf, where I can do no good; but after digesting all my food for thought, please lend me to a friend that I may be read and returned to you again. Then just keep me going, that I may carry my little message to as many as possible.

Remember, I was made to be read. And the more I am read, the more good I can do. Also, please handle me carefully: do not wrench me open too far and thus break my back; do not tear off my covers; nor tear out my leaves; treat me kindly and I will show the way of Truth to a great many before I am worn out.

## THE AUTHOR'S HONEST SENTIMENT AND PURPOSE

“I am pursuing Truth, and while I can keep my eye fixed upon my guide, I am indifferent whither I am led, provided she is my leader.”

J. H. TILDEN, M.D.

“We doubt whether a man ever brings his faculties to bear with their whole force on a subject until he writes upon it.”

W. E. CHANNING

“THINK”

IT WILL NOT HURT YOU

HERBERT EARNEST WINKLER

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**M**ANY PEOPLE pay very close attention to quotations.

And in the perusal of the pages of this book the reader will note that I have made many quotations. And many of the readers will recognize the fact that I have quoted from copyrighted works.

Having secured permission thus to use such writings I wish here to acknowledge receipt of same:

October 2, 1948

*Dear Brother Winkler:*

I shall be glad for you to use any thing I have written. It was written for the good it might do.

JNO. W. PIGG

December 2, 1948

*Dear Brother Winkler:*

You have my permission to quote from my book *The New Testament Church*, as you see fit in your proposed work.

L. R. WILSON

December 15, 1948

*Dear Brother Winkler:*

I want you to feel perfect freedom in quoting from my work entitled *The Church and Its Elders*, and also from the little four page folder which I published for more than three years under the banner of *The Ordained Elder*. If anything from my pen will be helpful to you in presenting to the Brotherhood the best book yet published upon the vastly important subject of Church organization, leadership and the elderhood, I shall be glad.

A. L. DEVENY

December 23, 1949

*Dear Brother Winkler:*

Yes, you may quote from the *Model Church*.

Why not? . . . Use it surely.

G. C. BREWER

I am also indebted to many others who have in various ways contributed to the study. One entire chapter was prepared on the strength of one single question propounded to me by my old friend and brother C. E. W. Dorris. Some of the articles have been lifted almost bodily out of religious journals and placed in this book with my concurring remarks or my criticisms of the positions taken, without asking permission on the ground of their being public property. Yet I think none of the criticisms offered will overbalance the free publicity I am giving their articles, under their names, in book form. From the general use I have made of said articles I think it is obvious that their authors will readily agree.

I wish, also, to acknowledge the fine spirit in which my friend Mr. Ernest A. Pickup (brother to our beloved preacher Harry Pickup, Sr.) co-operated with me in working out the uniqueness of the title and dedication combination.

#### HOW MANY?

Excepting the running title and chapter headings at the top of the pages through the book, according to the author's single count, the book, including this statement contains 131,333 words.

H. E. WINKLER

#### ERRATUM

Instead of reading "Old Hebron Church near Russellville, Kentucky" on pages 97, 108, 228, 233 and perhaps others, this should read "Old Kedron Church."

## IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE

IT OCCURS to the writer that it would near be an act of ingratitude and inappreciation of a loving helper were I to neglect to mention the assistance of a thoughtful companion.

This rounds out forty years that my Pearl (that is her name) and I have lived together. I began trying to preach before we knew each the other. We had one mind regarding marriage and family life. We launched our barque out upon the matrimonial sea with no training nor previous experience by which we could be prepared for the highs and lows of such an adventure.

The trying times of our course are legion. We knew at the genesis that continued association would be dashed to pieces and our desires scattered upon the ground; but setting our minds straight ahead we tried the experiment. Like "Presiding Elders" we have moved and lived hither and yon. She carried on and made a good "keeper at home," while her man was hundreds of miles from home for "months and months" at a time and gave him a warm welcome on his return.

The half orphans were under her care and responsibility and I reckon she did fully as well as the average woman, at least, who is left alone, in the training of the offspring.

She has been with me much in my preaching and public debates and never yet has she one time criticised my poise in the pulpit, or any argument made, or the wording thereof or emphasis by voice or gesture more than, which every woman may notice, to suggest that my hair (while I had some) should have been brushed back, or, my tie adjusted, or, my coat buttoned. All of which has given me easy equilibrium in the pulpit, knowing I was not headed for a series of criticising remarks so soon as once out from the crowd by ourselves.

Her life has been hard; but patiently borne, for which I cannot

withhold mention and thank all her friends who have been thoughtful of her and her Lord who gave her strength to carry on when relief seemed far away.

In view of the above it is no wonder that she has borne with me in the preparation of the material for this book; waiting up for me far into the silence of the night, while I tarried at the office long after the day's duties were executed, reading and editing this work, and even having hot meals for me, etc.

So may it be thoughtfully considered that if there is due any word of praise or appreciation for the untiring effort spread over a period of more than thirty years spent in the preparation of this book, that my helpmeet is amply worthy of her portion of appreciation.

THE AUTHOR

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#### THE OPEN DOOR

*An open tomb, an empty grave,  
The stone is backward hurled;  
The Lord of Life comes forth to save  
A lost and ruined world.*

*An open door to liberty  
From bonds of cold, stark death;  
The flowers of immortality  
Feel not his chilly breath.*

*An open door to hope and peace  
To rest and hope and love;  
And to a life that shall not cease  
In earth or heaven above.*

*An open door that none can close,  
Lift up your voice and sing!  
The gates flung wide, since Christ arose,  
And death has lost its sting!*

—“Our Scrapbook of Poetry”  
by Kathryn Smith

C O P Y R I G H T E D ?  
N O !

The preparation of the material appearing in this book has required many years of study, private discussion and oft discussions from the pulpit; stopping afoot, or while riding on the highway, and even arising after retiring at night to write out arguments which came to mind. I work for a living and so this book is presented to the reading members of the Church of our Lord, not from a financial consideration, but for the good it might do.

Many, even preachers, have told me they don't know anything about the eldership. I am trying to convince them that it is because they have not studied the subject.

The New Testament teachings regarding elders and the organization of the New Testament church are not obscure. Disregard for the New Testament teaching on this subject led to the apostasy of the early church and gave rise to the Papacy and the entire system of the Roman Hierarchy.

May the Lord's blessings be upon this book in its helping the church back to Apostolic Authority that its contents may live and be free to the use of every one wishing to use it for the glory of God and the salvation of souls after the author passes on to his reward.

May God abundantly bless the reader.

THE AUTHOR



D E D I C

To that body of  
men whom the Lord  
chose to set as  
watchmen over His  
Spiritual Israel; THE ELDERSHIP in  
each local  
Congregation of His church in  
whose care JEHOVAH has intrusted the souls  
of His children; even those who  
"Watch in behalf of your souls as they shall  
give account"

# A T I O N

"17) and  
The Great  
SHEPHERD of the sheep....even  
our LORD JESUS"  
(Heb.  
13:20) is  
this  
volume most affec-  
tionately and lovingly  
DEDICATED

To that body of men whom the Lord chose to set as watchmen over His Spiritual Israel; THE ELDERSHIP in each local Congregation of His Church in whose care JEHOVAH has intrusted the souls of His children; even those who "Watch in behalf of your souls as they that shall give account;" (Heb.13:17) and to "The Great SHEPHERD of the sheep....even our LORD JESUS" (Heb.13:20) is this volume most affectionately and lovingly dedicated.



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## PART ONE

### MAIN DISCUSSION

### INTRODUCTION

SOME FIFTEEN or more years ago I prepared eight articles on the Eldership which were published in the *Firm Foundation* and afterward the publishers of that Journal printed those writings in pamphlet form covering 56 pages.

The supply of that edition has, for sometime, been exhausted.

Additional calls have come for the publication and I have been requested to write a fuller treatise on the subject. So after having studied the subject more thoroughly and having discussed the eldership in the pulpit and engaging in the discussions prompted by my preaching, and observing the lack of information on the part of both preachers and members of the churches and seeing the dire need of more work along this line, I have decided to both revise and enlarge my former production.

My position on the "Novice" has met with approval by most of the thoughtful readers so far as I have been informed and a fuller study of the restriction is given in this edition, including a letter written to one of my critics whom I love very much.

Also my position on "Husband of one wife" has been well received by many of the preaching brethren as well as by others; nevertheless I have been bitterly assailed for claiming the teaching is restrictive or prohibitive instead of a positive requirement. It has been thought by some that I had certain men in mind, who were not married, that I was trying to maneuver into the eldership. Words would fail me and the adjectives I know are far too few and limited in describing my thoughts in condemnation of any brother who would so distort the Sacred Oracles for personal preference for himself or others.

In discussing any subject, I love to be as thorough as the human mind can grapple with the information given will allow. And as the "Husband of one wife" means something, I think the discussion of it is in order. Moreover, I hear of much discussion of the subject, and being so thoroughly convinced that I have the key to the apostle's teaching I propose a fuller discussion of this phase of the subject than was given before. I think my position and discussion of this teaching opens up a field of study that is sorely neglected by my opponents, who by the misuse of "the husband of one wife," making it a positive requirement for the elder to be married, fail to see and teach that Paul and the Holy Spirit were trying to safeguard and protect the church then and through all coming generations against polygamy and all kinds of modern adultery of multiple divorces and remarriages which have become so common that the churches, nearly everywhere, are infested with the abomination. And with this condition finding its way into the eldership of any congregation, the results would be disastrous indeed. The imperative need of a thorough study and application of the apostle's teaching on this subject, together with the need of more information generally, is the apology I offer for bringing another book before the eyes of my reading brethren.

The need of such an investigation, as I propose, of the eldership in the churches of Christ is augmented by the insidious (and I use the word in its full meaning) "No elder theory." The theory has been taught by designing brethren to the destruction of many churches of which the writer has knowledge. My appointments with a certain congregation were terminated because I dared to preach on the eldership without asking permission from the leaders in charge. The churches should know the men they allow in the pulpits and curb the hobby riders. And with a well qualified eldership safeguard the souls from being carried away by false teachers.

Many positions are held by the "no elder" hobbyists, some of which are here noted: (1) "The elder was for the infancy

period, or stage, of the church, and ceased to exist when the church was full grown or had received the full Law of Liberty.” (2) “The eldership was inspired and as the days of inspiration have passed, the eldership has ceased.” (3) “It would be all right to have elders if there were men qualified to be appointed; but as there are none qualified, we cannot have them now.” (4) “It would be all right to have elders; but we do not know how to appoint them, therefore we cannot have them now.” (5) “It would be all right to have elders if there was some one commissioned like Timothy and Titus to appoint them; but there is no one so authorized and therefore we cannot have them in the churches now.” (6) “Elders were appointed or ordained by fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands; but no one has the authority to impose hands now; therefore we cannot have elders in the churches in this age.”

I will not discuss the above positions here more than to brand them heresies. Each of the excuses will be annihilated in the course of the study, probably without direct mention but in such a clear manner that the reader’s attention will reflect and note the utter absurdity and foolishness of them. Weak and unstable congregations fall easy prey to the heresy and this brand of hobbyists thrive upon the ignorant but are seldom able to gain much headway with an advanced spiritually minded church. Being so conscious of my duty in this matter I feel that “Woe is me” if I do not teach along this line and I pray the Lord to give me success in completing this work provided He is pleased with my effort. Yet, teaching on the eldership and the organization and government of the church of the Lord is fraught with such grave consequences that, if I knew the Lord would not hold me to an account, I would choose never again to speak or write upon the subject. I am afraid to speak or write upon the eldership and I am afraid not to. So I accept the task praying God to bless me with an understanding of all his teaching thereon and wisdom in presenting the truth to my readers and hearers.

I am past three score years and have not rushed into print upon

this question without much study of the Scriptures and great experience in discussions with the teachers of the opposition.

The reader will observe that I am dealing with the present alarming status of the eldership problem; hoping that ere long the churches of Christ everywhere will have "set in order the things that" are now "wanting" to the advancement of real New Testament Christianity; and that the disorders, pointed out in this work, will have been corrected. Then will the author's purpose be accomplished, and his over thirty years' labor compensated.

Whereas there are several contributions to this collection of articles there have been no conferences between any of the writers as to what each one believed on this phase of the teaching or that. I have dealt with various theories and differed, and so expressed myself, with some of the contributed material. I think both sides of any subject should be heard and severer the test the clearer truth is when fully known.

But as I have firmly held to a position on "The husband of one wife," which is assailed by so many of the brethren, I wish to state the following on behalf of the brethren who have contributed articles to this production: Some of them may not, even now, know my belief or what I have written on that phase of the subject and are in no way responsible for my position nor are they to be considered as lending their indorsement to that or any other position the author has assumed in the course of preparing those articles written by him.

There is one thing I wish to ask of you reader who thinks I am wrong in my position on "the husband of one wife," which is: Before pronouncing your anathemas upon me, as others have done, before looking carefully into my reasons for my belief, I ask that you study what I write and if the reasoning is sound and has a Scriptural basis, that you accept it. But if you see the fallacy of my position that it is unscriptural and erroneous then be frank to thus inform me, for I am expecting, and am prepared for, many criticisms.

I have striven to handle this problem, first, on strictly a Scriptural basis and secondly, to deal with various angles from which the whole picture is viewed in such a manner as to cause a rift in the cloud of mysticism which shrouds the New Testament teaching.

May the Lord add His blessings to your reading and study of this book to the end that knowledge and appreciation of the subject under discussion may be enhanced.

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### BETRAYAL

*As I peruse the sacred scroll,  
No sadder face I find than this:  
That one who dipped into the bowl  
Betrayed the Saviour with a kiss.*

*But Judases there are today,  
And barter stains their finger tips.  
“Lord, is it I?” they mockingly say,  
A traitor’s kiss upon their lips.*

—Moody Monthly

## P R E F A C E

No GOVERNMENT can stand or carry on or maintain an orderly function without organization. If the organization of the United States Government were destroyed chaos and anarchy would be established and there would be no form and order. There must be organization in all group activity for peace and order to be crowned.

Now if all branches of group activity as pertaining to things of the earth must succeed only through proper organization, how much more shall it be necessary for the Kingdom or Government of the Prince of Peace to be properly organized? And so important is it, that God Himself set forth the system of government and holds the church responsible for the faithful maintenance of that system.

In the face of much theory and opposition to the organization of the church under a Scripturally qualified and ordained presbytery, the church must choose between the two with the responsibility of the maintenance of the Scriptural order and woe unto that person whose choice would hinder the heaven appointed government in the church of our Lord.

A friend has aptly said: "The eldership is definitely the weakest link in the churches of Christ." And this weakness has reared its ugly head like "The spectral form of evil" which entered the holy precincts of the organization of the early church resulting in the apostasy from New Testament Christianity and the establishment of Papal Rome.

This writer attributes much of this weakness to the various conflicting ideas the preachers hold regarding the Scriptural teaching on the subject.

Some say the teaching is obscure and they never preach about elders. While other preachers don't want the subject brought up for discussion while they are holding their pastorates. (Pardon the allusion please.)

Many claim the standard is set so high it is impossible for any one to attain. The standard set for the Christian is *perfect* and think you that the Lord set a standard more than perfect, or sort of a *super-deluxe perfect* standard, for the elder? All such carryings on about the mystery of the eldership add up to absolutely nothing—a complete zero.

Come now, lets get our feet on the ground and look at the teaching with wisdom in our hearts.

The Lord has set up a perfect standard for us all and he who does his best to attain thereto fails still to reach the goal of perfection and then God's grace applies. So the Lord requires that he who comes nearest to reaching the goal shall be ordained as elder among his fellows. And the writer's contention that the only major difference between an elder and what every Christian ought to be is that the Lord specifies that **MEN** and not **WOMEN** shall be elders in His church.

This book is set for the defense of the Scriptural organization in the churches of Christ and the author commands the reader "Unto God and to the word of His grace which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified."—**PAUL**

The *title* for a production of this kind may be appropriately given in any one of several wordings; but I have chosen to write under the caption, *The Eldership*.

Dear reader, is your mind prepared, unbiased, for what follows in the chapters ahead? ? ?

*Herbert E. Winkler*

Nashville, Tennessee  
March 6, 1950

This scribe lays no claim to perfection in his conduct and service rendered to the "flock" over which he has served as elder for the past twenty-eight years.

## THE FOUNDATION SCRIPTURE

“Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”—PAUL.

ELDERS \* DEACONS \* MEMBERS

IN THE ONE LOCAL CONGREGATION

OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee. . .” (Hosea 4:6).

“Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their hearts” (Ephesians 4:18).

WHAT A DREAD THOUGHT!

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## AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

WE CANNOT properly appreciate the correct status of the local congregation or church of our Lord without the understanding and appreciation of the word autonomy, autonomic, or autonomous. But we regret to say that many of those who are considered well informed do not know what the autonomy of the church means.

The word auto is from the Greek *autos*, meaning self. Autonomic: having the power of self-government, hence autonomy: the quality or state of being autonomic, or autonomous; specif., the power or right of self-government.

We understand this to be the status of each local congregation and that each congregation is designed to be a complete unit within its own organization and that so far as one congregation and its elders are concerned it has no authority nor power over any other congregation. In other words, the Lord designed the organization of each congregation to be a complete unit within itself of such a nature that if every congregation on earth were destroyed save one He would still have a complete church on earth.

Now, if we are correct on this and we have every Scriptural reason to believe we are—the elders of one congregation have no authority as elders over another congregation. So in New Testament times they “appointed elders in every church” (Acts 14:23), and “in every city” (Titus 1:5).

But there is such a lack of understanding among the preachers and churches now that oftentimes a church will suppose they do not have proper material of which to appoint elders and thus proceed to set up a substitute in the form of a committee to guide

the affairs of the church. Thus they appoint an unscriptural thing to do and carry on a scriptural work. But in the eyes of this writer as long as a congregation (?) has not developed to the point of having elder material it still retains the status of a mission and should be under the watchcare of the elders of a well established church.

We believe also that the elders of each congregation have vested within them the sole earthly authority in the church and that their authority is from Christ the Chief Shepherd. That being true the preacher or evangelist has no innate authority residing in him, and that he should be working under the direction of a well organized church. Even the grand apostle Paul was sent out by the church at Antioch to do mission work. And when the tour was ended he returned to that same church and reported the accomplishments of the journey.

It is a sad note that many present-day preachers usurp authority over the churches and yet think they are doing God service.

It should be noted that God appointed that a plurality of elders should rule in each congregation and that a drift from this order to one elder ruling over a plurality or diocese or a group of assemblies led ultimately to the Pope and the apostasy was an actual fact, and we see Roman Catholicism rears its head as the apostate church. Here I give you the advantage of some quotations:

"The apostasy of the early church worked largely through the deterioration of its organization: God's order of a plurality of elders in each local church was gradually changed till it finally reached the point when one elder would rule over a plurality of churches and finally to the Pope." . . . "In the second century the two terms *episkopos* (bishop, overseer) and *presbuteros* (elder) were regarded as terms designating two distinct groups of church officers; and in the third century, contention arose throughout Christendom as to which should have the supremacy in the Government of the church. The bishops were the victors. They succeeded in relegating the elders of individual congregations to the place next to the bishops. At that time congregations ceased to be independent units, but became parts consisting of many groups or assemblies within the limits of a certain territory designated a diocese which had a bishop as its head. Thus we can trace the maneuvering of the apostate church as it jockeyed itself into

the position where the whole so-called Christian realm in the world found itself under the rule of one who was designated "Universal Bishop" and became known as the "Universal Father" or Pope.—A. L. DEVENY in *Ordained Elder*, March 1946, page 1.

We presume that most people know enough about the Roman Catholic Hierarchy to know that the Pope is recognized as its infallible head. The Pope is supported in his claims by the Cardinals who are next in rank to him, who are made by the Popes, and who in turn usually are entrusted with the selection of the Pope, and of his consecration and coronation. There follow, then, the archbishops and archdeacons, the bishops and deacons, the clergy which is made up of various orders of priests. Among the overseers are to be found the reverends, very reverends, and right reverends. All of the churchmen below the Pope support him in all of his claims, and that there may be little likelihood of traitors developing within the ranks of the ecclesiastical order a man must be thoroughly grounded and indoctrinated in the tenets of the Roman Catholic Faith. For instance to become a member of some of the priestly orders it takes as long as fourteen years of study to qualify. Varying periods of time are required in the making of different orders from the local priest to the Pope and, obviously, more age, training, and experience are required in those nearer the top of the hierarchy.

As has been indicated before, for approximately 1000 years there was no open challenge of any consequence of the Roman Catholic Church. In A.D. 1517, however, a man arose within the organization who had convictions and who had the courage of his convictions to do whatever seemed necessary to bring about the correction of certain abuses under the guise of religion which constituted common practice in the Roman Church. That man was none other than Martin Luther who made his protest by nailing his famous ninety-five theses to the door of the Catholic Church in the town of Wittenberg, Germany. In A.D. 1521 he was summoned to appear before the Diet which was meeting in the city of Worms that he might be tried for heresy. Warned by his friends not to go to Worms, he replied: 'I'll go to Worms, if there are as many devils there as there are titles upon the housetop.' Martin Luther failed to correct error in the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, but he became known as the father of the Reformation. Without his intrepid soul to pave the way, we wonder where might have been Protestantism today.—*Ibid.*

### WHERE IS AUTHORITY?

In all forms of group activity there must be a leader. Among all the nations there is a federal or governmental head. And there are subordinate branches of authority, all of which are answerable to the federal head. So Christ is the great head of the New Testa-

ment Church having all, or, supreme authority in heaven and in earth. But it is a pretty generally recognized fact, at least among the preachers of the church of Christ, that the earthly authority resides in the *eldership* of the local congregation. But this authority must not be abused. The writer knows congregations where the elders (?) will not, or at least do not, allow or ask any one besides themselves to serve at the Lord's Table. This writer, also, was present when one of the elders of that local church arose to serve at the table and heard him say "The elders of the church have the sole right or authority to serve at the Lord's Table." May the Lord pity the ignorance of those who could have but do not know!

The autonomy of the local congregation is fully visible to the fluent pen of the writing Evangelist. He is usually understood as he writes to the effect that the local church, or its elders, have no jurisdiction over or in controlling the affairs of a sister congregation. And in his annual meetings he appears quite humble and exalts the Eldership to its God-given place so that the brethren conclude "This man is the most conscientious in his handling of the truth that has been with us for a long time and is a God-send to our community." And a most favorable report of the meeting is sent in to the religious journals telling what a great preacher Brother A is, which advertises him for meetings in other fields.

### BUT ALAS!

A local congregation grows to the proportion that seems, in the estimation of many of the members, to require the services of a full time minister. So conferences are held, negotiations are entered into, and the thing is accomplished—the preacher moves in. The elders may know better, but through, what they call, courtesy the new exegete is invited into the business meetings of the church. They ask his opinion on this and that and usually decide matters in his favor. As a result, the preacher feels his importance and through his self-acquired authority begins to speak in the language of Ashdod and talks about "My elders" and brazenly announces: "I want to see the elders and deacons in a business session in one of the rear rooms immediately after the benedic-

tion." And if the elders do not wag their tails to his moochings or turn thumbs up and down as he signals, then he swells up and sets himself in array against them, and through politicing among the members he soon secures a majority following and proceeds to oust the *bonehead* elders and appoints new ones chosen by himself from among his supporters.

With this cancer eating away at the very vitals of the church and parading itself with self-appropriated authority that God gave only to the Scriptural Elder in His church there is *little* wonder that perilous times are fastening upon the Cause and that a great apostasy, in some parts, seems imminent.

May we remind you again that the church is a kingdom. Jesus Christ, as head over the church, is King. Members of the church are citizens of the kingdom which, incidentally, is an absolute monarchy. It should be clear, therefore, that the membership of a congregation, any congregation, cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered a democratic unity. Only in a democracy may the citizenry decide issues by ballot. The membership of the church must submit to those men who watch for their souls in obedience to divine injunction. Those men are the elders.

Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, has provided that certain men in the congregation who have the character, reputation, and certain other necessary qualities shall carry on His work of shepherding and overseeing the flock as His stewards. In so far as the Ephesian church was concerned this work was done by the elders.

Even as the Lord Jesus occupies the dual position of Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (I Peter 2:25) in His spiritual relationship with the flock, His offices are projected upon and into the congregation through the visible elders.—A. L. DEVENY

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### THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

*And without controversy  
great is the mystery of godliness;  
He who was manifested in the flesh,  
Justified in the spirit,  
Seen of angels,  
Preached among the nations,  
Believed on in the world,  
Received up in glory.*

—1 Timothy 3:16

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A PERSPECTIVE VIEW

IT IS WELL for all readers to have a general view of the over-all picture of the *Eldership* before going into this volume of study. This chapter should give one a fair conception of the office and function of the elders.

## NEW TESTAMENT WORDS

By which the Elder is designated

ELDER: Acts 20:17

BISHOP: I Timothy 3:1; Acts 20:28 (R.V.)

PASTOR: Ephesians 4:11.

PRESBYTER: I Timothy 4:14

OVERSEER:

SHEPHERD: I Peter 5:4.

Christ the chief Shepherd.

Elders the lesser shepherds.

STEWARD: Titus 1:7

There are other words used with reference to his work and influence which are not generally used, in our time, to designate elders. They are: RULE, Hebrews 13:7, 17

ENSAMPLE, Hebrews 13:7; I Peter 5:3.

LEADER, although I know of no passage which refers to the elder as a leader, yet the very nature of his duties sets him forth as such.

### WHY EMPLOY DIFFERENT WORDS?

ELDERS or PRESBYTERS denote age or experience. The age must be sufficient in years, in each individual case, for one to have acquired that experience in life to justify one in not being referred to as a novice. "Not a novice."—I Timothy 3:6

BISHOPS or OVERSEERS denote work to be done. There is no such thing as an elder in the church of our Lord being idle or having nothing to do. Work is the honest man's middle name.

SHEPHERDS or PASTORS denote the nature of the work to be done: To tend, pasture, feed, etc.

STEWARD. "A household officer on a lord's estate having charge of the cattle; later, a head manager in the administration of a manor or estate," etc. (Webster). In the New Testament, or spiritual, sense one who has the charge, or care, of the souls of the flock of God.

I do not recall a case where the New Testament applies any of the above terms to a preacher or other members of the church.

My friend and brother, A. L. Deveny, gives some interesting study here. I quote from his book *The Church and Its Elders*, pp. 124-126.

We note that the words, Elder and Presbyter, are synonymous. The former is of Anglo-Saxon origin and the latter of the Greek. Both words may refer to "a person occupying any office appropriate to such as have the experience and dignity which age confers; as, the elders of Israel; the elders of the apostolic church." (Webster's Dictionary).

SHEPHERD and PASTOR, Anglo-Saxon and Latin derivatives respectively, likewise are synonymous and carry the idea of tending and feeding.

BISHOP and OVERSEER, respectively Anglo-Saxon and Greek derivatives; both have the meaning: "one who oversees, superintends, or supervises." A RULER exercises authority. STEWARD is an Anglo-Saxon word used to indicate one who is in charge of and at once is responsible for things of value which belong to another. A LEADER is one who has authority to precede and direct; a guide; and an ENSAMPLE is something which serves as a pattern or a model to be imitated.

It is understood, therefore, that the terms elder and presbyter refer to the church officer; while shepherd and pastor, bishop and overseer, ruler, steward, leader, and ensample are terms which indicate functions which

these officers exercise. The terms used to indicate functions were divinely inspired and although they do what the Holy Spirit intended for them to do, it was never intended that the particular functionary should be referred to as anything else than elder or presbyter.

Usage, and usage alone, makes the term "elder" the more acceptable in the church of Christ in English speaking countries, particularly. Moreover, since all ten of the above words refer to the same church officer, there is no divine authority for the setting up of any other officers in the church under any of these names.

All of the above functions except one are active. Those functions which require activity on the part of the elders were indicated by the apostle Paul. One function, viz., that of being an ensample to the flock, is purely passive in nature and was pointed out by the apostle and elder Peter. Peter mentions this passive function in connection with his warning to elders that they exercise care not to appear as lords over God's heritage. Peter, even as Paul, would have elders do their work in humility and love; not thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think, which is enjoined upon all Christians alike.

The manifold duties of an elder, therefore, may be summed up with six words. They are: shepherd, overseer, ruler, steward, leader, and ensample.

In a broad sense there is no obligation imposed upon elders by God that is not incorporated in the one or the other of the two functions mentioned by Paul in his address to the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:28) and by Peter (I Pet. 5:2).

Brother L. R. Wilson, from whom I have the privilege to quote, writes very clearly in his book, *The New Testament Church*. I quote from pp. 72-75:

### III. THE CHURCH HAS ELDERS

Luke informs us that Paul and Barnabas "appointed elders in every church" (Acts 14:23). The elders were the overseers of the spiritual welfare of the local congregations. This is evident from a particular instance given in Acts 20:17, 28, which reads, "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church." When these elders arrived Paul said to them: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." Here we have three terms applied to the same men. They are called the "elders," the "bishops," and the "pastors." This latter word is implied in the verb "to feed." The Greek signifies to "be pastor" to the flock. The words used in the original to designate these men are: *presbuteroi*, *episcopoi*, and *poiman*. These three terms are translated by six English terms, respectively: elders or presbyters, bishops or overseers, pastors or shepherds. The apostle Paul

uses all of these to designate the same men. These different terms simply suggest the type of men who should be selected to look after the spiritual welfare of the congregations, and the sort of work they were to do. First, they were to be men of mature age and experience. This is the meaning of the term *presbuteros*, which we translate "elder" or "presbyter." Second, they were to have the oversight of the congregation. This is the meaning of the word *episcopos*, which we translate "bishop" or "overseer." Third, they were to feed or tend the flock, as "shepherd" or "pastor." This is the meaning of the word *poiman*.

Each congregation had a plurality of elders, pastors, or bishops—depending upon which of these terms you prefer to use. This is evident from numerous passages (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; Acts 20:17, 28), where we read of a plurality in each congregation. Never does the New Testament speak of one pastor over one congregation, or one elder over a plurality of congregations, or a bishop over several congregations.

#### IV. THE CHURCH HAS DEACONS IN EACH CONGREGATION

From Acts 6 we learn of the appointment of the first deacons. Paul addressed his Philippian letter "to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the 'bishops and deacons'" (Phil. 1:1). From I Tim. 3:12, 13 we learn the qualifications of the deacons. The term itself means a "servant." From Acts 6:1-6 we not only see the type of men selected for the first deacons but we learn that their work was to look after the temporal welfare of the congregation. It is evident from the New Testament that "every" congregation had a plurality of men especially chosen to see after its temporal needs.

The elders and deacons are the only "officials" in the church, except, of course, Christ the head and the original apostles. All other officials are foreign to the Word of God. The largest earthly organization known to the New Testament is a local congregation, with its elders and deacons. It is true that the church is sometimes spoken of in a sense which includes all the saved, or all the people of God. When we think of it in this sense then we always think of Christ as the one and only head, the apostles as his ambassadors, and all Christians as members of that one body. Unless we think of the church in this universal sense then there is but one other way in which we can think of it, namely, as a single congregation, with its elders and deacons. The elders of each congregation are amenable to no authority save that of the Lord Jesus Christ. They cannot legislate for the Lord in any sense. All of the authority they have is to lead, supervise, and care for the congregation over which they have been appointed. They should be familiar with the Word of God and seek to have the congregation carefully instructed in the same. Beyond this they cannot go.

Brother G. C. Brewer prepared a rather unique arrangement, for his book, of the various Greek terms designating the different

phases of the office, work, and duties of the presbyter, which I think merits a place in this book.

I quote him as follows:

It should be observed that there are several different words in the New Testament that designate an elder. The words are not synonymous, but they very evidently refer to the same person, each one representing some particular phase of his office, work, or duty. These words in English are "bishop," "elder," "presbyter," "pastor" or "shepherd," "overseer," and "ruler" ("those who rule"—Rom. 12:8).

Let us now learn the meaning of these words, for in them we have many of the duties and qualifications of those who are to do the work of a bishop. These words and their definitions are here presented in a form that can be used as a chart if any class so desires to use them. On the left of the brace is the Greek word, first in Greek then spelled out in English. Beneath these is the English word by which the Greek word is or may be translated and the reference in which the word is found. On the right of the brace the definitions are given in full from Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. By this method it is hoped that the youngest Bible student may be able to appreciate the lesson from these words.

<p>επίσκοπος <i>episcopos</i> bishop, overseer (Acts 20: 28; Tit. 1: 7; 1 Tim. 4: 1; Phil. 1: 1.)</p> <p>πρεσβύτερος <i>presbuteros</i> presbyter, elder (Acts 14: 23; 1 Tim. 5: 1, 17; Tit. 1: 5; 1 Pet. 5:1.)</p> <p>τουμήν <i>poimeen</i> pastor, shepherd (1 Pet. 2: 25; 5: 2; Eph. 4: 11.)</p>	<p>An overseer—a man charged with the duty of seeing that things done by others are done rightly; any curator, guardian, or superintendent; in the New Testament, a guardian of souls, one who watches over their welfare; the superintendent, head, or overseer of any Christian church.</p> <p>1. Of age—(a) the elder of two; (b) advanced in life—an elder, a senior.</p> <p>2. A term of rank or office; (a) among the Jews, a member of the Sanhedrin; (b) those who preside over the assemblies (or churches). That they did not differ from the (<i>episcopos</i>) bishops or overseers is evident from the fact that the two words are used indiscriminately. (Acts 20: 17, 28; Tit. 1: 5, 7.) The title <i>episcopos</i> denotes the function; <i>presbuteros</i>, the dignity. The former was borrowed from Greek institutions; the latter from the Jewish.</p> <p>A herdsman, especially a shepherd; (a) in the parable, he to whose care and control others have committed themselves and whose precepts they follow (John 10: 11, 14); (b) metaphor, the presiding officer, manager, director of any assembly. So of Christ (1 Pet. 2: 25); so of overseers of Christian churches (Eph. 4: 11).</p>
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<p><i>προισταμενος</i>  <i>proistamenos</i>        to rule. (Rom. 12: 8.)        "are over you."        (1 Thess. 5: 12.)        "rule well." (1 Tim. 5: 17.)        ruler, president</p>	{	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To set or place before, to set over.</li> <li>2. (a) To be over, superintend; to preside over (1 Tim. 5: 17); with the genitive of the person or thing over which one presides (1 Thess. 5: 12; 1 Tim. 3: 4); (b) to be a protector or guardian; to give aid (Rom. 12: 8, to rule).</li> </ol>
<p><i>ἡγουμενοι</i>  <i>hegoumenoi</i>        to lead, to rule        (Heb. 13: 7; 17, 24.)</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To lead—i. e., (a) to go before; (b) to be a leader; to rule, command; to have authority over; leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel; so of the overseers or leaders of the Christian churches (Heb. 13: 7, 17, 24).</li> </ol>

As it is the duty of a bishop to care for, watch over, rule over, and lead a congregation of Christians, it is certainly no matter of surprise that the Lord has been very minute in telling us just the kind of men to place in this position. It is a hazardous business to ignore or to make void any of God's arrangements. Because men have been honored with the office of a bishop who were unworthy of it, many churches have come lightly to regard the Lord's appointed. Even in some places the elders (so called) are treated with contempt by some members of their flock. This is bringing God's order down very low indeed. Either the man should cease to be recognized as an elder or he should be treated with the respect and deference due an elder.

*The Model Church*, pp. 27-29

This chapter serving, in a sense, as a key to the subject matter of this book should be studied well in the outset. The reader will also need to refer back to it repeatedly as he comes upon certain problems in the perusal of the chapters which lie ahead.

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### BY WHAT AUTHORITY

"If any man speaketh, *speaking* as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, *ministering* as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.—I Peter 4:11.

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## AN OUTLINE ON THE ELDERSHIP

ACTS 20:13-38

### A PRELUDE

BEING so very closely associated with some expert promoters of the *no elder theory* and knowing enough of God's will to appreciate the fact that one is responsible to his maker to the full extent of his knowledge I was forced to fall in the line of battle and fight with my might. I was also surrounded by strong men in the cause who were the leaders in the battle against the hobbyists.

For three or more years the swords of battle clashed in business meetings, in private conversations at various homes, in discussions on the street corners, as many as seven days in the week and as late as the third watch in the night. The opposition would no sooner be silenced on one absurd position than it would be found clamoring for another until we at times would grow faint with battle and almost wonder if the peace would never come.

The conflict was augmented by good meaning preachers who argued we were injuring good men and warned us to go slowly. That is the cry the Israelites made to Moses and Aaron, in the matter of Korah, saying, "Ye have killed the people of Jehovah" (Numbers 16:41). It matters not how good and moral a man is, if he sets aside the authority of the Lord, by his theory, he stands condemned before God and I know of nothing more serious than for one to seek to destroy the organization of the Church of God, which thing surely smells to high heaven.

In those discussions we were confronted with various posi-

tions on the subject of Elders some of which are listed elsewhere in this book.

As a result of all those discussions I began to preach on the subject of the Eldership and I am here giving one of my outlines which covers the subject quite fully, giving enough material for five or six sermons.

I here wish to acknowledge indebtedness to Brother H. Leo Boles for some of the outstanding points submitted in the following outline.

But maybe, "We are preluding too largely and must come at once to the point."—JEFFREY

Some years ago I prepared an outline of study on *The Eldership* or *Church Organization* which formed a basis for some five or six discourses. That outline of study was later revised to incorporate some thoughts from a sermon which the writer heard preached by Brother H. Leo Boles.

Some thoughts are emphasized in this outline which are not given much prominence elsewhere in this book.

The outline follows:

### THE ELDERSHIP (Acts 20:13-38)

#### *Introduction*

Note the importance: Needs to be studied.

Disturbing many brethren and churches now.

Lamentable that preachers and churches disregard the matter.

#### *The Local Preacher*

has caused this question to become acute in many places. Being more popular with the members he schemes and polities and finally ousts the elders, in order to appoint some more in sympathy with himself.

And some claim the New Testament teaching on the eldership is obscure.

#### *The Group Activity*

there must be leaders for the movement to prosper. The de-

nominations are satisfied on this question; but the churches of Christ are not in agreement.

### *The Autonomy of the Local Church*

*Definition:* Self-governing or independence as respecting other congregations. A complete, independent self-governing body under the head, who is Christ.

All congregations are on an equality in God's sight.

They are all alike in organization.

No such thing as one having elders and another not having elders *and both pleasing God.*

Their work, worship, and mission are the same; yet all independent of each other.

### *There Were Elders in Every Church*

Proof: Acts 11:27-30; 14:23; 15:2; Titus 1:5.

The church at Jerusalem, in addition to the Apostles had elders. How much more then do we need them?

### *Appointed by Paul*

His first journey covered about three years, and from Derbe he returned appointing elders, "In every church" (Acts 14:19-23). Did not wait very long.

What about old congregations that have no elders?

### *Elders and Deacons*

in the same churches. See Philippians 1:1.

### *The Government of the Congregation*

The leaders in all groups govern the activities thereof.

Elders take the oversight—the rule of the body.

Passages: Acts 20:28; I Thessalonians 5:12-15; I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 5:1-4.

These Scriptures exclude the preacher.

### *Different Forms of Church Rule*

Among the denominations there are three forms of church rule, namely: (1) Episcopal. (2) Presbyterian. (3) Congregational.

1. *Episcopal*. The theory that in church government *Supreme Authority*, resides in a body of bishops, and not in any individual, such as the Pope. The Bishop is superior to a priest, and a priest to a deacon. The Bishops are styled Right Reverend Fathers in God.

2. *Presbyterian*. "That form of church government which vests presbyters with all *Spiritual Power*, and admits no prelates over them."

3. *Congregational*. "That system of church organization which vests all *ecclesiastical power* in the assembled brotherhood of each local church."

But the Church of the New Testament does not fall under either of these heads. It is not a Democratic institution.

*It is autocratic in rule.* "An absolute sovereign; a MONARCH ruling by claim of absolute right, without restriction; one who rules with indisputed sway in any company or relation."

The elders rule by Christ's authority and others are commanded to submit.—TO WHOM?

### *Perpetuity of the Eldership*

Does it continue?

*Question:* Does the church still have to be ruled or governed?

If elders have ceased, then what is the RULE in the church now?

Does God have a form of government now? Then in whom has he vested that rule or form today?

But one says "The New Testament is the government."

Yes and the New Testament is the gospel; but there must be preachers to preach it.

Depose all civil rulers, give all a copy of the laws. Now watch the results.

### *Inspiration of Elders*

Some say elders were inspired.

It cannot be shown that they AS **ELDERS** were inspired, or that all elders were inspired.

Some say they ceased when inspiration ceased.

The burden of proof falls on their shoulders.

Elders not found among the gifts of the New Testament.

It is assumption to claim they ceased.

Inspiration is not one point of qualification.

If elders were inspired AS SUCH then in Acts 20:17 to the close is a case of one inspired man giving instructions to a group of inspired men.

Elders were in the first church and were still in the church when the New Testament closed.

*They had apostles and elders both in New Testament times*

We have the apostles now, in the record they left us.

The elders left us no record and so we must have them in person.

Paul gave the qualification of elders near the close of his life, but why give it so late if elders were to cease?

If the eldership passed away then that part of the New Testament is obsolete and no longer needed.

The work they did then is needed now.

There was a certain class of men to rule the church and feed the flock. Then what class is to do this work now? *Ans.* Not the apostles, for they had the apostles then, and if it is their duty now, it was so then, and so why did they have elders?

They had a specific work to do—*TO FEED.*

#### DEACONS

They also had deacons. *Acts 6:1-6; Philippians 1:1.*

Mentioned in the qualifications. *I Timothy 3:8-13.*

*Deaconesses:* *Romans 16:1, 2; I Timothy 3:11.*

These were the servants of the churches.

#### *When Is a Church Organized?*

It cannot be Scripturally organized without elders and deacons. See qualification of both, *I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9.*

Blamelessness or without reproach is the one great quality considered and then Paul proceeds to state wherein he must be

blameless or without reproach.

The strength of *MUST* is found in him who is blameless.

### *How Are They Appointed?*

Three brothers held three positions: William, David, and Granville Lipscomb.

William said: "No Elders."

David said: "Yes Elders; but no way shown to appoint them."

Granville said: "Yes Elders, and a way shown to ordain them." He held to the idea of *fasting, prayer, and the imposition of hands*.

Appoint is always used in the Revised Version.

There is no specific way revealed for them to be appointed.

Your way, if it is decent and orderly, is as good as mine or any other.

I object when one says of his idea, "This is the way the Bible shows."

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### LIKE THEE

*Saviour and Master,  
These sayings of thine,  
Help me to make them  
Doings of mine;  
Words that like beams  
Of Humanity shine,  
By them let me build up  
The holy, divine.*

—Selected

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## THE APOSTASY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

By B. C. GOODPASTURE

### THERE MUST BE NO DEPARTURE FROM THE DIVINE PATTERN

The only source of infallible authority for the church of the Lord is Jesus Christ. He is that prophet of whom Moses wrote when he said, "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deuteronomy 18:18, 19; Acts 3:22, 23). He has the Father's endorsement (Matthew 17:5) and is endued with all authority (Matthew 28:18). He is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18); not only so, but he is also head of all things to the church (Ephesians 1:22). It is fitting that he alone should have this authority over the church. He built it (Matthew 16:18) and he paid for it (Acts 20:28). He has every right to determine the work, the worship, the teaching, and the organization of the church. Through his inspired apostles he has revealed to us all that we need to know concerning the church and every other matter that pertains to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3; II Timothy 3:16).

If we would see the apostolic church in its original purity and beauty of pattern, we must go all the way back to the New Testament. It is the only authoritative teaching concerning the church. No board, convention, association, conference, or synod has any right to legislate for the church of the Lord. They may, and do, legislate for man-made denominations, for the existence of which

there is no divine authority (Matthew 15:18); but the church of the Lord is not, nor has it ever been, a denomination. It antedates all denominations by many centuries. No creed, confession of faith, manual, or discipline can supply infallible teaching concerning the primitive church. If, for example, we would know the Lord's will concerning the eldership, we must go to his last will and testament, the New Testament, for the information.

In the centuries since the establishment of the church there have been many departures from the faith. The work, the worship, the teaching, and the organization of the church have all been corrupted at various times in various manners by the devices of men. The earliest of these departures from the faith had to do with what is commonly called the "organization" of the church. It is well to keep before us always the New Testament pattern of the church. This, of course, includes the eldership.

*The apostolic church, or congregation, had a plurality of elders, or bishops.* This fact is set forth in a number of passages in the New Testament.

1. We find the examples of individual congregations with their respective plurality of elders. There were elders or bishops in the church in Jerusalem (Acts 11:29, 30; 15:4; 21:18); in the church at Philippi (Philippians 1:1); and in the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17, 28).

2. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church which they established on the first missionary tour (Acts 14:23). These men had been specially selected for this work by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2). We cannot doubt that they were qualified to meet any situation that might arise while they were on their journey. They knew what they were doing. Although these congregations had not been established many months, elders were appointed by these inspired men to rule over the newly made disciples.

3. Again, Paul left Titus in Crete that he should set in order the things that were wanting and "appoint elders in every city" (Titus 1:5). This shows that a congregation without elders falls short of the New Testament ideal. In this respect: that is, *if it*

*have not elders, it is “wanting.”* With one elder, a congregation is still “wanting.”

4. The statement of James, “Is any among you sick? let him call the elders of the church,” etc., assumes the presence of elders in every congregation (James 5:14). Otherwise, it might be difficult, if not next to impossible in some cases to follow his instructions.

Moreover, there is no instance on record in the New Testament of the apostles leaving any congregation permanently to the care of a single individual. In every case there is a plurality of elders, or bishops. Never, in the New Testament, do we read of the *elder* of the *church* or of the *elder* of the *churches*; it is always and invariably the *elders* or the *bishops* of the *church*. There is no authority in the Bible for the elders of a given congregation trying to exercise the oversight over a plurality of congregations. They can be elders in only one congregation at a time. They must recognize and respect the autonomy of the local congregation. The wisdom of the divine plan in providing for a plurality of elders is easily seen. It provides for the unity of counsel and diversity of talents necessary in the oversight of any group of people and precludes one-man rule and dictatorship in the congregation.

*In the churches of the New Testament there was no distinction between the bishops and the elders.* The two words were applied interchangeably to the same class of persons.

1. The duties of the elders and the bishops are the same. The bishops feed the flock (Acts 20:28); the elders tend it (I Peter 5:2); the bishops take care of the church of God (I Timothy 3:5); the elders rule over it (I Timothy 5:17).

2. The qualifications of the elders and bishops are the same. In Titus 1:5-9 we find the qualifications of elders, and in I Timothy 3:1-7 we have the qualifications of the bishop. There are some qualifications mentioned by Titus not mentioned by Timothy, and some mentioned by Timothy not mentioned by Titus, but they have so many in common that the identity of the

elders and bishops, on the ground of common qualifications, is beyond reasonable question.

3. Paul, in writing to Timothy, after describing the qualifications of bishops, goes no to name the qualifications of deacons, without making mention of the elders. This would be unthinkable in this connection, if elders and bishops were not the same (I Timothy 3:1-7).

4. When Paul wrote to the Philippians, he addressed his epistle to the saints, "with the bishops and deacons." His failure to mention the elders is inexplicable if elders and bishops are not the same.

5. If one should yet doubt that the two words have reference to the same persons, his doubts should be forever dispelled by the fact that Paul in Acts 20:17 is recorded as having summoned the *elders* of the church of Ephesus to meet him in Miletus; and after their arrival he addressed them as *bishops* in verse 28 of the same chapter. This puts the matter beyond question. An inspired apostle spoke of the same men as elders and bishops. He made no distinction between them.

It is the duty of the elders or bishops, "to feed the church of the Lord (Acts 20:28); to "tend the flock of God . . . exercising the oversight" (I Peter 5:2); to "Take care of the church of God" (I Timothy 3:5); to "rule" (I Timothy 5:17); to "watch in behalf of . . . souls" (Hebrews 13:17); to be "ensamples to the flock" (I Peter 5:3). It is sometimes said that the elders have the oversight of the spiritual affairs of the church and that the deacons have the oversight of the temporal and financial affairs of the church. This is without authority in the New Testament. The elders have the oversight of all the affairs of the church. When Paul and Barnabas brought money to the poor saints in Jerusalem they gave it to the elders, not the deacons (Acts 11:30). We take it that they knew who had the oversight of the temporal and financial affairs of the Jerusalem congregation.

By perverting the teaching of the Bible concerning the elders, their qualifications, and their duties, some of the initial steps

were taken to prepare the way for the *great apostasy or falling away from the faith.*

Speaking of the churches of the first century, Mosheim, the distinguished church historian, says:

All the churches, in those primitive times, were independent bodies; or none of them subject to the jurisdiction of any other. For though the churches which were founded by the apostles themselves frequently had the honor shown them to be consulted in difficult and doubtful cases, yet they had no judicial authority, no control, no power of giving laws. On the contrary, it is as clear as the noon-day, that all Christian churches had equal rights, and were in all respects on a footing of equality. Nor does there appear in this first century any vestige of that consociation of the churches of the same provinces, which gave rise to ecclesiastical councils, and to metropolitans. But, rather as is manifest, it was not till the second century that the custom of holding ecclesiastical councils first began in Greece, and thence extended into other provinces. (*Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1, p. 72.)

During a great part of this century, all churches continued to be as at first, independent of each other, or were connected by no consociation or confederation. Each church was a kind of small independent republic, governing itself by its own laws, enacted or at least sanctioned by the people. But in the process of time it became customary for all the Christian churches within the same province to unite and form a sort of larger society or commonwealth; and in the manner of confederated republics, to hold their conventions at stated times, and there deliberate for the common advantage of the whole confederation." (*Ibid*, p. 116.)

Concerning these early departures away from the simple New Testament pattern, Rowe, in the *History of Reformatory Movements*, well remarks:

As we approach the close of the second century, we find marked changes; some of them of a portentous and dangerous character, and as already indicative of the fact that the *apostasy had set in*. The enlargement of the jurisdiction of bishops, by extending it over dependent churches in the neighborhood of the towns and cities, and the multiplying of church officers, were innovations significant of coming evils. By degrees church officers, by assuming powers which did not belong to them, grew into a distinct order, and placed themselves above the "laity" as the appointed medium of conveying to them the grace of God. A church in the capital of a province, with its bishop, easily acquired a precedence over the other churches and bishops in the same district, and thus the metropolitan system grew up. A higher grade of eminence was accorded to the bishops and

churches of the principal cities, such as Rome, Alexander, and Ephesus; and thus we have the germs of a more extended hierarchical dominion.

Early in the third century the unscriptural distinction between elder and bishop had become quite clear.

It is not till we reach Cyprian (A.D. 248-258) that the distinction in rank between bishop and presbyter becomes very distinctly marked. In the preceding period, that is, from 150 to 250, speaking roughly, the *chief presbyter* in the city church is called the bishop to distinguish the *president* from his *fellow-presbyters over whom he presides*. (Witherow, *The Christian Temple*, p. 408.)

These early departures from the faith, involving a distinction between elders and bishops and the extension of the authority of elders, reached their climax when the bishop of Rome was styled the head of the church, and later pronounced infallible in his *ex cathedra* utterances. All departures from the truth are dangerous. Some, however, it seems are more far-reaching in their evil consequences than others. Among the most iniquitous are those which have to do with the eldership. There must be not the slightest deviation from the divine pattern.

#### COMMENTS BY THE AUTHOR

A retrospective glance at the history of the church through nearly twenty centuries with our gaze resting upon those frightening prophetic statements of Paul in his warning to the Elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:28-30) and his description, in his second letter to the church in Thessalonica, of the *man of sin* who had begun, even then, to rear his ugly head in defiance of Him "who is over all," with the determination to sit "in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God," (II Thessalonians 2:3-7) is enough to make the man of God shudder with fear lest he through carelessness, or neglect, should be guilty of any perversion of the Scriptural organization of the church of his Lord.

Corruption in the organization of any government precipitates the corruption of law and order.

Corruption of the organization of the church precipitates corruption of the doctrine and worship of the church of the Lord.

And we see from Brother Goodpasture's article that perversion or corruption of the *eldership* was the determining cause of the church's falling from her exalted mission of saving souls into the great apostasy culminating in the papacy.

Shall the high-handed disregard for the New Testament organization of the churches of Christ, under a *Scriptural eldership and diaconate* lead the church of our Lord into another *Apostasy*?

Brethren, think on the matter.

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### THE BROKEN PINION

*I walked through the woodland meadows,  
Where sweet the thrushes sing,  
And found on a bed of mosses  
A bird with a broken wing.  
I healed its wounds, and each morning  
It sang its old sweet strain;  
But the bird with a broken pinion  
Never soared as high again.*

*I found a young life broken  
By sin's seductive art,  
And touched with Christlike pity,  
I took him to my heart.  
He lived with a noble purpose,  
And struggled not in vain;  
But the life that sin had stricken  
Never soared as high again.*

*But the bird with the broken pinion  
Kept another from the snare,  
And the life that sin had stricken  
Raised another from despair.  
Each loss has its compensation—  
There is healing from every pain;  
But the bird with the broken pinion  
Never soars as high again.*

—Selected

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## THE STRANGEST OBJECT EVER SEEN BY MAN

By E. C. FUQUA

**E**ZEKIEL 40:5-10 represents the strangest object ever to be revealed to man. The angel, whom Ezekiel saw, had a measuring reed six cubits long (approximately 10 feet) by which he measured a building. The building itself, over all, measured exactly one reed square. This building one reed square, had a number of "lodges" or rooms within it, and each room within the building was the exact size of the building itself! It is not possible for the human mind to conceive of such a building—only the Divine Mind can portray such. Yet there is no other figure to be drawn that could represent the church of Christ as revealed in the New Testament. Such a structure could not have been invented by man. It is as far above man's comprehension as God Himself is above man. What, then, did this mysterious building represent—this building with inner rooms, and each room exactly the same size of the building itself?

This building seen by Ezekiel was a prophetic representation of the church of Jesus Christ. The building itself represents the whole church or body of Christ. Each single "lodge" or room within it represents each congregation of the church or body of Christ. From the vision we learn that God intended to portray His church as it must exist on this earth. Whatever practice or doctrine the church itself presented, each local congregation of that church had to present in its organization exactly the same doctrine and discipline as that which characterized the church itself. That accounts for Ezekiel's strange vision. It exactly fits the organization known in the New Testament as the church of Christ.

The above is from the pen of Brother E. C. Fuqua in *The Vindicator* for March, 1949, p. 2.

### SUPPLEMENT

That the building shown to Ezekiel was in a large measure a type of the church I believe. And while Brother Fuqua uses it as a basis in presenting an argument on the unity which is in Christ Jesus it very clearly sets forth that for which I have long con-

tended regarding the organization of the church here on earth. Brother Fuqua also makes mention of this same thing.

That every informed member of the body of Christ knows that the organization of the New Testament Church is made up of elders, deacons, and members requires no argument (Philippians 1:1).

If it is necessary for one congregation to have elders and deacons to be a Scriptural church then it is also necessary for every congregation to have elders and deacons to be Scripturally organized.

To put it another way: God has ordained that His church should be organized with elders, deacons, and members working together to further His cause among men.

And the local congregation comprises a complete unit of the church and there is nothing on earth, known to Christians, smaller or larger than the local congregation that has Scriptural approval.

And here is the point:

God wants each local church so organized with its corps of elders, deacons, and members that if every other congregation on earth were destroyed except that one, he would still have a complete church in the world. And so according to the pattern seen by Ezekiel wherein each small chamber or room in the house was equal, in size, to the house itself, there are many congregations of the church of Christ on earth and the measure of each local congregation of the church is the same measure as the church itself. The same God, Saviour, Holy Spirit, Gospel, Belief, Obedience, Name, Lord's Supper, Love, Purpose, and Hope.

The church therefore in the aggregate has nothing which was not designed for possession of the local church.

The measure of the larger is equal to the measure of the smaller and likewise the measure of the smaller is equal to that of the larger.

So the church of the Lord and the local congregation of that church being equal to the same thing are equal to each other.

## CHURCH ORGANIZATION

By H. LEO BOLES

JUST RECENTLY I came across a copy of Brother Boles' booklet on the eldership from which I wish to quote a few of his pointed arguments, "But first here is a message for you."

There has been more controversy in the church over Elders, in these latter times, than over any other one question; and there probably will always be such.—E. C. FUQUA

The Eldership is definitely the weakest link in the churches of Christ today.—JAMES A. ALLEN

Now, here is Brother Boles, "and the news";

One of the major problems that confront the churches of Christ today is that of the eldership. Many congregations are inactive because they have not a Scriptural eldership; many others are divided over the question of elders. . . . Many of the churches of Christ are weak and unable to maintain the dignity and influence that a church of Christ ought to have in a community, because they do not understand the teaching of the New Testament on this vital question. A Scriptural eldership would give strength to the church and commend it to the community as a respectable group of worshipers. Churches everywhere ought to study this question and let the New Testament guide them in the selection of qualified men for this important work. . . . The only organization that the New Testament teaches is the organization of the local congregation with its elders and deacons. It was physically impossible for all Christians scattered over the earth to meet in the same place for worship; so it became necessary to localize the church for the convenience and development of its members. It was necessary for the church in the general sense to take the form of local congregations in order that God might govern the members of his body. We are impressed with the extreme simplicity which God has given to the local congregation. *Whatever authority Christ left with the Church was vested In The Elders.* There is no higher earthly authority in the churches than that found in the eldership, if authority it may be called. . . . They rule by the word of the Lord. They dare not assume any

authority not delegated to them by the Lord. *They must not manufacture any expedient nor substitute anything for the government of the church, save that which is found in the New Testament.*

#### COMMENT

Some churches are now governed by a committee which has been appointed for that purpose, in each respective congregation. If Brother Boles is correct and I believe he is; then what is this committee other than an *expedient* or a *substitute* manufactured by man to govern that church?

Some who do not understand the qualification Paul gave are so afraid they will appoint an *unqualified* man, they "up" and appoint an *unscriptural committee* to perform a scriptural work.

If the Lord should prefer either:

Unqualified men formed into an *unscriptural committee* to do a Scriptural work,

OR,

Unqualified men appointed on a Scriptural (?) eldership to do a Scriptural work,

I think he would choose the latter.

So in the absence of qualified men it may be wise to make NO appointment at all.

Now, back to Brother Boles, "and the news":

The elders of the congregation are to see that the church fulfills its mission. The eldership of the church must govern the church. . . . All the authority for governing the church that Jesus left on the earth has been vested in the eldership of the church. Paul said: "But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake" (I Thess. 5:12, 13). Again: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching" (I Tim. 5:17). And again: "Remember them that had the rule over you, men that spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith" (Heb. 13:7). "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17). Other Scriptures could be quoted showing that the authority to govern God's people has been vested in the elders. Elders are members of the congregation of which they are a part. Their authority does not

go beyond the boundary or membership of their own congregation. No elder has any authority whatsoever over another congregation. The independence and autonomy of the church forbid one elder ruling over more than one congregation. Any system of church government that extends the authority of elders beyond the confines of their own congregation is contrary to the New Testament teaching and perverts God's order for the government of his people. All churches are organically separate and are governed by the *same law* and animated by the *same spirit* and seek the *same end* and are intrusted with the *same power*. If one elder or all the elders of a congregation had authority over other congregations, then the congregation of which that elder or elders are members would be superior to the church over which this elder or elders rule. This would destroy the independence and equality of the churches. It would nullify the autonomy of the local congregation.

#### CALLED BY VARIOUS WORDS

Those who look after the flock are called "shepherds"; those who feed the flock are "shepherds"; "shepherds" and "pastors" mean the same thing; hence, "pastors," "overseers," "bishops," and "elders" must apply to the same class of men in the church. When these men have been appointed according to the New Testament order, and when they have been honored as the New Testament teaches that they should be, then the churches of Christ will be in much better condition to fill their mission than they have been heretofore. The Holy Spirit had a specific work for elders to do in the congregation. There was a specific work which should be done by those who were called in the New Testament "elders" in every church in New Testament times. It must follow that if churches today follow the New Testament order and the work outlined in the New Testament for a church, *then there must be elders in every church today*, or the New Testament churches are no patterns for churches today. If we are not to follow the New Testament in the organization of churches today, then why should we follow the New Testament example of work and worship?

#### THE ELDERSHIP—HOW APPOINTED

No one can ignore the divine organization of the church without rejecting God. It is as important to teach the divine organization of the church as it is to teach the doctrine and worship of the church. The divine organization of the church represents the wisdom and authority of God as much as the work and worship represents his will. The eldership has been depreciated and ignored until the elders themselves in many places do not respect their position. The church has in many places degenerated because of the lack of showing respect to the divine organization of the church. The elders have been superseded in their work; on the one hand, by the preacher, and their position ignored; and, on the other hand, by the mem-

bers, until they have become almost useless appendages in the church. But we are to consider how elders are appointed.

Like many other questions pertaining to the eldership, there are diversities of opinions and conflicting theories about the appointment of elders. Some maintain that elders gradually are developed and grow into the position and work of elders. This position is not tenable. If one brother can grow and develop into an elder, why cannot many or all of the men so develop into elders? In large congregations there might be two or three dozen men who are capable in talent and suited in character to develop into elders. How would the congregation know just who the elders are, if they are gradually developed and assume the work of elders?

Others take the position that elders are appointed by prayer, fasting, and the laying on of hands. Those who maintain this position refer to Acts 6:1-6. This Scripture says nothing about elders or even deacons. It is generally understood that the seven brethren mentioned in this Scripture were to serve as deacons; however, there is no statement in the text that shows that they were deacons. At any rate, this would show how the apostles appointed deacons, if it should be conceded that these were deacons. It would not teach how elders were appointed, and one would have to infer that elders were appointed in the same way that these deacons were appointed. The best that could be had from this Scripture is an inference. Again, Acts 13:1-3 is given to show that the ordination of elders in New Testament times was done by prayer, fasting, and the laying on of hands. But in this case elders were not ordained or appointed. Saul and Barnabas were sent out to the work which God had for them to do. They were not ordained as elders of the church at Antioch or anywhere else. This Scripture does not prove that *elders were appointed by the laying on of hands*. There is no Scripture that teaches that this was the way to appoint elders in the church.

Others claim that elders were elected by a vote of the church. They claim that a majority vote decides the question as to who shall serve as elders. In many instances those who claim that elders should be elected by majority vote claim that they should serve only a year, or at most, three or four years, and that they should be retired and others elected to take their place. Such a position has no Scripture to sustain it. Not only is there no Scripture for electing elders by majority vote, but such a procedure would defeat the will of God. The writer does not care at this point to enter into a discussion of the "majority rule" of the church, neither the "election by majority vote" of elders. Suffice it to say here that such positions have no Scriptural authority. All the actions of the church must be the action of the entire church. The New Testament does not present any case where a part of the church can act *one way* and another part *another way*.

The New Testament always speaks of elders being "appointed" or "ordained." Nowhere do we read that elders were "elected." There is

*no method revealed* in the New Testament for the selection or appointment of elders. . . .

#### HOW SOON APPOINTED

We cannot determine the time that it took Paul to make his first missionary tour. Many scholars think that it was no longer than three years. None of the churches where he appointed elders at this time were three years old, according to this chronology. The churches at Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium could not have been more than a year old. These churches were composed of some few converted Jews, but a large percentage of them were converted Gentiles. A church composed of converted Jews and Gentiles not older than one year had developed material sufficient to meet the requirement of elders. This argues strongly that such can be done today. No one can claim with assurance that the elders appointed here on this trip were inspired and that they were qualified so quickly by a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit. Such a position is not tenable."

#### ELDERS AND PREACHERS

It is as important to maintain the New Testament order of organization in the church as it is to maintain the faith and worship of the church. . . .

God placed the guidance, teaching, discipline, and the development of the church under the eldership of the church. When the preacher gains the confidence and esteem of the church and has greater influence over the members than do the elders there is something wrong. It has been known that preachers have gone to established congregations, and they got the control of the congregation within six months' time, and ousted, by popular vote, the elders of the church who had been serving the church for many years. Preachers are usurping authority and lording it over the church until the eldership has become a nonentity in the church. The preacher has exalted himself and has usurped authority until he reigns over the church like a pope. When the eldership displeases the preacher, some excuse is found for displacing the elder and electing some one to take his place who will do the bidding of the preacher. Is the preacher amenable to the eldership? Must the elders submit to the preacher? In some places the preachers have openly *declared that the eldership is inferior to the preacher; that the preacher is above the eldership.* . . . In some cities the preachers are interested in getting members from other congregations. In some places daily invitations are given to the people of God by the preacher to come and build up that particular congregation. Many preachers selfishly wish to build up "their church" to make a show and appear to be doing a wonderful work. Such is not the work of an evangelist.

The work of an evangelist is under the eldership of the church. If an evangelist goes to a place to labor for a week or for a year with that church, he ought to recognize the eldership and work under the supervision of the

elders. (*But this is just what most preachers do not want to do.*—THE AUTHOR) It is true that there is a great deficiency in the eldership of all the churches; it is true that possibly none of the elders measure up to the standard of the New Testament requirements; but it is also true that evangelists are as inefficient and imperfect as are the elders. The incompetency of the eldership does not justify the evangelist in perverting God's order of organization. The preacher has no more right to disturb or pervert the New Testament order of organization of the church than he has to pervert the faith or corrupt the worship of the church. For a preacher to rebel against the Scriptural eldership of the church is to rebel against God and his order of organization. *It is a high crime against God for the preacher to usurp the authority of the eldership and by popular applause lead the membership away from the Scriptural order of the organization of the church.*

If the evangelist understands the New Testament teaching, he will understand that his is not an office, but a work. Many have been led to think that all preachers are "elders," and many think the preachers are "pastors." "Elder," "overseer," "presbyter," "bishop," and "pastor" are different names for the same class. A preacher might be an elder, but he is not an elder simply because he preachers. It is a perversion of God's order to speak of the preacher as "the pastor." He may not even be *a* pastor, and surely he cannot be *the* pastor. It is the custom of some preachers to get themselves appointed as an elder of the congregation where they go. Oftentimes the preacher is the chairman of the "board of elders," thus placing the eldership of the church under the preacher. *There can be success in the church only as it follows God's order in organization as well as in faith and worship. A leader or preacher who perverts the organization of the church corrupts even its worship. . . .*

*When is a church organized?* When a group of Christians is meeting in a place for worship and doing all that the Lord requires of a church to do. A church as viewed by the New Testament is a body. When all of the members of the body are working and worshiping in the name of the Lord, the church is organized. *It is organized when the elders and deacons are appointed and are directing the members according to the will of God.*

*Can a church worship God acceptably without Scripturally qualified elders? If so, how long can it do so?* A church is a church only when it is fully organized. It cannot be properly termed a "church" in its completeness until it has all of the essential qualities of a New Testament church. A church that is filling its mission or is in the process of development may please God without or before it has elders; but if it is developing as rapidly as is possible, it will not be long until there will be material ready to take the oversight of the congregation. . . . Some churches in the New Testament were ready for elders within a short time.

*How did the Holy Spirit make elders? How does the Holy Spirit make elders today? . . .* When these evangelists followed the instructions of the

Holy Spirit, it was the Holy Spirit appointing elders. The Holy Spirit makes elders today just as he makes Christians. "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flocks, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). The Holy Spirit had made these men elders through Paul or some other servant of God. So the Holy Spirit makes elders of men today.

#### COMMENTS BY THE AUTHOR

It surely would be wonderful if all the churches were Scripturally organized with every elder, deacon, preacher, and member working *solely* for the glory of God and the salvation of humanity.

*May the Lord hasten that good day!*

But I am persuaded to believe that those who will come under Brother Boles' above criticism, and also under the condemnation of Jehovah, may comprise the smaller group of God's children; for there are many real God fearing men and women in the kingdom who really love God and want to go to heaven, and are working and sacrificing to that end. Man's real vocation should be living the Christian life. This done, then, everything temporal will automatically assume its proper place wherein God designed that it should function.

It should be noted that Brother Boles stated regarding the elders appointed by Paul on this first missionary journey that "No one can claim with assurance that the elders appointed here on this trip were inspired and that they were qualified so quickly by a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit. Such a position is not tenable." While I do not conclude that these elders did not have spiritual gifts bestowed upon them as well as many of the disciples of the apostolic churches were blessed; I am not prepared to accept the teaching that they were qualified in a large measure by the Holy Spirit for that work. While having no New Testament by which to be led in their teaching the Holy Spirit may have assisted them, as was Stephen and Philip, in the teaching of the word.

I believe that Paul was governed by his instructions to Timothy and Titus in appointing these men. All qualifications, where character or right living enters the picture, are acquired by adhering to the teaching and not by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

It is claimed by some that the appointing and qualifying of these elders in Acts 14:23 come under the direct application of Ephesians 4:11, "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, *pastors* and teachers," and that these elders were given to be "*pastors*" and qualified in conduct and teaching by the Holy Spirit before they could possibly have acquired the necessary qualification in their lives. God does not select evil men and make good men of them by thrusting His Spirit upon or into them. Whatever may be the full meaning of Ephesians 4:11 it is obvious, that it does not apply to Acts 14:23 as is claimed above.

And regarding the appointment of substitutes such as a committee or company of leaders in lieu of elders and claim as the example and authority for such action, the appointment of the seven in Acts 6, to take care of an emergency requires a stretch of the imagination which this writer is incapable of imagining. But as long as preachers misunderstand the New Testament teaching on the qualification of elders and think of it as applying to angels instead of to men and keep on telling their listeners they are not good enough, and never will be, to be elders, all potential elder material in the churches will be frightened away from even aspiring to the eldership. I resent the idea that we do not have blamelessly qualified men in the churches capable of eldering Scripturally in the church and am trying to quash the idea that we do not.

Do you mean that conditions are now like Elijah thought they were in his day? Romans 11:2-4 and that the Lord does not have "at this present time . . . a remnant according to the election of grace"? Romans 11:5.

#### A LOOK AT EPHESIANS 4:11

I simply list without extended comment the trend of thinking by some eminent writers upon this verse.

"11 *And he gave some to be apostles;*—Here are enumerated the gifts bestowed on the disciples by him when he ascended on high, in the order of the fullness and importance of these gifts.

Strictly speaking the term apostle applies only to the twelve and to Paul. . . . They left no successors. . . .

*“and some, prophets;—*The prophets were inspired to make known the will of God after it had been revealed to them through the apostles. . . . Like that of the apostles, the function of the prophets ceased to be necessary when the foundation had been securely laid.

*“and some, evangelists;—*Evangelists were those who were supplied with the gifts to go into destitute fields to make known the gospel. They seem to have acted under apostolic direction, and were the missionaries of the time.

*“and some, pastors and teachers;—*Those endowed to feed and teach those already Christians the duties and obligations resting on them as children of God. All these were miraculously endowed, spiritually gifted to perform the work for which they had talent and turn or disposition. These gifts were to endure until the perfect will of God was made known, and were intended to teach the children of God until the scriptures were completed. Then the gifts were to cease.”—David Lipscomb and J. W. Shepherd, *A Commentary on the New Testament*, Volume IV, pp. 77, 78.

*“Pastors and teachers.* These were not distinct offices. Bishops or elders, and especially those ‘who labored in word and doctrine,’ came under this head. A pastor should always be an elder, but it is not certain that a teacher was always an elder. These offices were all given for purposes indicated in the next verse.”—B. W. Johnson, *The People’s New Testament with Explanatory Notes*, Vol. II, p. 198.

“The organization of the church is not a mere human arrangement; its officers are of Divine appointment. . . . *And some, pastors and teachers.* The more ordinary settled ministers of congregations, called pastors, because they watch over the flock, trying to lead all in right ways; and teachers, because they communicate Divine knowledge. Some have thought that each expression denotes a separate office, but, coupled as they are together, it is better to regard them as indicating two functions

of one office" (see I Timothy 5:17; Acts xiii.1).—*The Pulpit Commentary, Galatians, Ephesians*, pp. 148, 149.

"The apostle next tells us, what were Christ's gifts at his ascension, v. 11 . . . and all were more solemnly installed, and publicly confirmed in their office, by his visible pouring forth of the Holy Ghost in an extraordinary manner and measure upon them. Note, The great gift Christ gave to the church at his ascension, was that of the ministry of peace and reconciliation. The gift of the ministry is the fruit of Christ's ascension. And ministers have their various gifts, all from the Lord Jesus.

"The officers Christ gave his church were of two sorts; *extraordinary*, as *apostles, prophets, and evangelists*; *ordinary*, as *pastors and teachers*; two names, so some, to signify one office, implying the duties of ruling and teaching belonging to it; or, as others, two distinct offices, both ordinary, and of standing use in the church; and then *pastors* are such as are fixed at the head of particular churches, with design to guide, instruct, and feed them, in the manner appointed by Christ; therefore frequently called *bishops* and *elders*: and the *teachers* were such, whose work it was also to preach the Gospel, and to instruct the people by way of exhortation."—*Matthew Henry's Commentary*, (Baptist Edition) *Acts-Revelations*, pp. 391, 392.

I wish to add a single observation, viz:

In the discussions, I have heard, of the verse under consideration some are wont to argue that the evangelist is a fixed member or stone in the structural setup or organization of the New Testament Church this side of the apostles or spiritually endowed period thereof. From the scriptures setting forth the organization of the church seemingly as it should carry on after the divinely inspired and spiritually gifted stage the idea seems to be wanting.

When mention is made with reference to the organization of the church the evangelist is not mentioned as being an integral part. The scripture, seems not to exist, that sets the evangelist forth as one in whom God has vested authority in the permanent activities of the church. Paul, the great apostle, addressed himself "to all the saints in Christ Jesus . . . at Philippi, with the

bishops and deacons," which seems to indicate that they comprised the whole church in that area. Also, this appears to be the general idea of the commentators quoted above. However, there may be noticed in some of the quotations that there existed some doubt in the minds of some as to what might have been the full scope of the activities of the evangelist in New Testament days and the exact orbit in which he is to move now.

The author has ever been inclined toward the position expressed by Brother Boles that "The work of an evangelist is under the eldership of the church. If an evangelist goes to a place to labor for a week or for a year with that church, he ought to recognize the eldership and work under the supervision of the elders."

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#### A KIND WORD

*Just a word of kindly greeting;  
Just a thought of other's care;  
Just a word of love repeating;  
How it lifts the load that's there!  
Just to know another's thinking;  
Just to feel another's there;  
Just to hope another's drinking  
At the fount of friendship fair.  
This it is that sets us feeling;  
This it is that cheers the soul;  
This it is that comes revealing,  
What is friendship's real goal.  
Let me then a kind word speak;  
Let me cheer another's heart;  
Let me joy for other seek  
As in life I take my part.*

—Hall L. Calhoun

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ORGANIZATION AND THE GREAT APOSTASY

BY JAMES A. ALLEN

No one could think that the church Christ established would have about it anything of human organization. It has nothing of what the world in its wisdom considers to be organization. Christ is the Head of the Church. "And he put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Epheisans 1:22, 23). Christ being "Head over all things to the church" makes it impossible for any man to rightfully claim to be head over the church in anything. The church's only Head is in heaven. He said, before His ascension: "All authority in heaven and on earth hath been given unto me" (Matthew 28:18).

Christ governs His church through His twelve apostles. They are His official spokesmen. They do their work today through the Bible, as they did it orally and personally in their lifetime.

When people heard the gospel and obeyed it, they constituted the church in their community. Being baptized into Christ, they became members of His body, "which is the church." These churches, or local congregations, established and set in order by the apostles, constitute the only divine organization.

The apostles ordained a plurality of elders or overseers in every congregation. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed" (Acts 14:23).

The work of the elders of every congregation is to oversee the affairs of the congregation, to study every member and to instruct and encourage them in living the Christian life. "Obey them that

have the rule over you, and submit to them; for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief; for this were unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).

Every congregation is also a center of light, to carry the gospel not only over its own neighborhood, but to regions beyond. "For from you hath sounded forth the Word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place, your faith to God-ward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything" (1 Thessalonians 1:8). They were taught to support financially those who are preaching the gospel. "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need" (Philippians 4:16). All of the work done by the congregation is under the oversight of the elders.

The apostles also appointed deacons in every congregation to work under the oversight of the elders.

The work of the deacons is to look after the material needs and wants of every member of the church, and also of all the poor in their neighborhood. Under the elders, they are in charge of the work of supplying the needs of the poor, and of the fatherless and widows.

Thus every New Testament church today, following the example of the apostolic churches, is a complete, perfect and independent organization.

There are no outside officials over it to supervise it or to give it orders. Christ Himself is its Head and rules and governs it through His apostles, as they speak through the Bible. The church under its own overseers, is all-embracing and self-sufficient and perfectly fitted for the accomplishment of every good work. The only organization known to the New Testament is the local church. Two or more churches cannot be merged into any organization larger than a single church. Any institution larger or smaller than the church is unknown to the teaching of the apostles. The church is the institution that God, in His wisdom, ordained to preach the gospel. It is "the pillar and support of the truth." (1 Tim. 3:15). It is the institution that God has appointed to feed

the hungry, clothe the naked, and to care for the fatherless and widows in their afflictions.

The overseers of the church are not authorized, by either apostolic precept or example, to turn their evangelistic work over to any now started organization, either inside or outside of the church; neither are they authorized, by either precept or example, to take the care of the poor, the fatherless, and widows, from the hands of the deacons, whose especial business it is, and turn them over to any outside organizations of any character or kind.

#### THE APOSTASY OR BREAKDOWN FROM WITHIN

It is inconceivable why puny, fallible man will rebel against God. God is his Creator and Preserver. He is the great Fountain from which comes every blessing man enjoys. Man's very breath is in His hands. Yet man, with every evidence all around him of God's love and tender care, presumes to disobey God and to set up his own wisdom against the wisdom of God.

The Christian religion is the fulfillment of all God's purposes toward man. It will lift man from sin and ruin and give him a new birth into a new life and restore him to covenant relationship to God. But it cannot be corrupted and perverted. A perverted and contaminated gospel is robbed of its power to save.

The apostles of Jesus Christ "preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven" (1 Peter 1:12). Guided by the Spirit, they gave the full revelation of all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that called us by His own glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). They established the churches and set them in order. They gave the ordinances of divine service and established the divinely given order of work and worship. All necessary for the redemption and restoration of mankind was a faithful and dutiful conformance to the divine order of things in Christ.

But the apostles themselves predicted the Great Apostasy. "Let no man beguile you in any wise", said Paul: "for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the Man of Sin be revealed,

the Son of Perdition." This monster personification of wickedness would be the consummated result of a great portion of the Christian profession apostatizing or falling away from the pure, inspired teaching of the apostles of Christ. The man of sin would not be an Outsider, an Atheist, an Infidel or a Pagan. But as the Master was wounded in the house of His friends and betrayed by one of His apostles, so the Son of Perdition would appear inside the church, while professing great faith in Christ, and bore from within, instead of offering open and above-board opposition from without.

The inspired penman predicted that he would be an apostate Christian and described him as "he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped: so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God," by assuming powers and prerogatives that belong only to God. Impiously presumptuous, he does not blush to set aside the laws and to substitute therefor legislation and laws of his own. Paul added: "For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work" (See 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12). Even in the lifetime of the apostles a movement began to grow in the church, led by men like "Diotropes, who loved to have the preeminence among you", and by men who were seekers and lovers of filthy lucre, in which a spirit of worldliness began to envelop the churches and began to prepare the way for setting aside the apostolic order of things, as originally ordained by the Holy Spirit through the apostles.

"But the Spirit saith expressly," predicted the apostle, "that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits", or deceiving preachers, "and doctrines of demons," or doctrines concerning the spirits of dead men. Not only claiming to have dominion over souls in Purgatory, but canonizing or "santing" dead men, "through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron." They would preach a monastic life, advocate celibacy, "forbidding to marry," and observing Lent, or "commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by

them that believe and know the truth" (See 1 Timothy 4:1-5).

Through the apostle Peter, the Spirit said: "But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchadise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not" (2 Peter 2:1-3). "Supposing that godliness is a way of gain", they set aside the teaching and example of the apostles, and "teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake", or making a commercial profession of the Christian religion, they brought on the great apostasy, or the "falling away" from original Christianity until "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" was obscured and lost sight of in the maze of "the precepts and commandments of men".

The breakdown of the eldership in the primitive churches was the first overt act, produced by "the mystery of lawlessness", in the digression from Jerusalem to Rome. Under the apostles the churches each had a plurality of overseers or elders, sometimes called bishops. With the beginning of the Apostasy, and the development of the spirit of lawlessness that did not hesitate to set aside the apostolic order of things, one of the overseers or bishops was able to raise himself above the others and to become "The Bishop" of the church. The others rapidly wilted away into bishops or elders in name only, or became a sort of official board subservient to, and manipulated by, "The Bishop". Rapidly "The Bishop" assumed jurisdiction, not only over the church of which he was "The Bishop", but also, first over the whole city, in which his church was located, and then over the district or diocese, in which his church was located. Bitter rivalry soon developed between the Big Bishops, as to who should be supreme. In the race for supreme power all the various Bishops were left behind,

when it narrowed down to a contest between the Bishop of Rome and The Bishop of Constantinople. Finally, in the year 606, the Roman Emperor, Phocas, who was a murderer and a usurper, as payment of a political debt, gave the title of "Sovereign Pontiff", Universal Father, or "Pope of Rome", in the sense in which it is now used, to the Roman Bishop Boniface III.

With the development of the "Sovereign Pontiff", and his assumption of "The Triple Crown", and his claim to being the only rightful ruler of all the world, both religiously and politically, came the development of that great ecclesiastical-Political Hierarchy that has hovered, like a pall, over the people of the earth, and that has domineeringly sought to control, for its own selfish ends, everything in their lives, of both a public and a private nature.

It created a multiplicity of Officials, and Offices, that are entirely unknown to the New Testament. No intelligent man could possibly think that there is any connection whatsoever between the humble Christian of New Testament times, who adhered so faithfully to "the apostles' teaching", and the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, with her Popes, her Cardinals, her Patriarchs, Primates, Metropolitans, Archbishops, Archdeacons, monks, friars, nuns, etc., etc. Nor would any one, with the New Testament open before him, think for a moment, that the apostles of Christ, as they were guided by the Holy Spirit, taught such things as priestly ablution, auricular confession, transubstantiation, extreme unction, or purgatory; nor did they teach and preach such things as the use and worship of images, relics, holy water, burning incense, counting beads, penances, invocation of dead men and women, and veneration and worship of Mary, whom they pray to as the "Mother of God". Assuming the power to legislate, or to give laws, which belongs only to God, it should be noted that "His Holiness, the Pope," at the Council of Ravenna, in the year 1311, set aside baptism, as taught by the apostles, and introduced sprinkling as a handy substitute. Those who practice instrumental music in worship should also note that it did not come from Christ and the

apostles, but that it was introduced by the Pope in the seventh century. Missionary Societies, and, indeed, a multiplicity of various adjunct organizations came from the Pope, who impiously and wickedly presumes to legislate for God.

“And he shall speak great words against the Most High,” and while claiming to be the Representative of God on earth, and demanding honors that belong only to God, he does not hesitate to annul the Word of God, as spoken through inspired men, and to substitute instead his own commandments and laws. “And shall ware out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time” (Daniel 7:25).

As the Bible exposes his wicked career, he censored and suppressed the Word of God. And as the Bible is the Light from God to man, and the Sun in the interlectual sky, with its suppression came a long, black night of superstition and ignorance, and of the tyranny of the few over the many, that historians most appropriately designate as the “Dark Ages.” Not material darkness, but interlectual, moral and spiritual darkness, that can only be the result of shutting off the Light that can come only from God’s Holy Word. The true church, that small minority of Christians who refused to kiss the foot of “His Holiness”, hid out in the dens and caves of the earth. The masses groaned in bondage under the iron heel of kingcraft and priestcraft. The people of God prayed for the dawn of a better day.

#### COMMENTS BY THE AUTHOR

Wise preachers and those who aspire to be leaders in the churches of Christ today should take note of the truthfulness of Brother Allen’s conclusions. It is no less than a historical fact that the Great Apostasy of the early church was wrought through the deterioration and disintegration of its organization.

That congregation of disciples today that is without elders and deacons and is derelict in its study of the scriptural organization and thoughtless of the need, is vulnerable to various attacks from

designing "men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gains" (1 Timothy 6:5), "and in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you" (2 Peter 2:3). Shall we allow Satan to repeat his destructive work after we have escaped from the iron heel of the Roman Hierarchy? God forbid.

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### Is My WONDER JUSTIFIED?

It may be noted in the preceding articles by Brethren Boles, Goodpasture and Allen as well as in other articles in this book and from the general writing and preaching of all who give much thought to the Scriptural organization of the church that emphasis is placed upon the fact that during the early days of the church elders were appointed in all the churches and from Acts 14:21-23 it is noted that they were appointed while the churches were quite young.

Particularly we note that Paul, with his companions, went among the heathen and pagan peoples proclaiming the gospel of the Christ establishing churches and appointing elders before departing or shortly thereafter. Now the churches are sending missionaries to various countries and having converted many who are workers in the congregations the missionaries are remaining with the churches and reaching out and doing work at points within a radius of near one hundred miles; thus making the originally established congregation a radiating center from which they work. And yet no word of elders having been appointed in the original church which has been established as long as it took Paul and Barnabas to complete their first missionary journey; and yet when he completed the trip elders had been appointed "in all the churches."

Brethren, something is wrong. Are you not preaching a complete gospel? Have you lost a portion of the Book? Is organization of the church less important now than it was in New Testament days?

"Brethren, are we slipping?" I WONDER.

## PART TWO

### —•• 1 ••—

#### ELDERS IN ALL THE CHURCHES

**T**HAT THERE were elders in all the New Testament Churches may be proven without much effort, notwithstanding there are those among us today who assert that the New Testament teaches there were churches without elders and that people may worship God acceptably and never have them. “And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders” (Acts 15:4). “And when they had appointed for them elders in every church” (Acts 14:23). “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge” (Titus 1:5). These statements are easily understood; they say, “elders in every church” and “elders in every city.” Considering the fact that each congregation is a complete unit—a complete church of Christ—and that no congregation has authority over another, but that each congregation or church is a self-governing body, by the word of the Lord, which is the rule of our faith and practice, it is, therefore, as necessary to appoint elders in every congregation as it is to appoint them in one congregation; and if it is not necessary to appoint elders in every church, then it is not necessary to appoint them in any congregation.

If the churches could have done the work of the Lord to the pleasure and satisfaction of Jehovah, without elders in them, I think God would not have required their appointment. The very fact, then, that God required elders to be appointed “in every church” and “in every city” is ample proof that a church must have them in order to do the work as God wants it done.

I do not believe that any congregation has a scriptural organization, or is scripturally organized, that does not have elders. That those churches mentioned in the passages given above might have the scriptural organization completed, they were required to appoint "elders in every church" and "every city." If a congregation can go on and worship God acceptably and never have elders, then that congregation would be scriptural and perfect, and to add something to that which is perfect would render it imperfect. So to add elders to that church or congregation would render it unscriptural and imperfect, which would place Paul in the attitude of ruining all the churches; and not only so, but he taught Timothy and Titus to do the same by appointing elders in them.

After a congregation has been started, there comes a time when God would have elders appointed in it, just as there came in the churches of the above passages; and when that time comes, if they do not appoint them, but ignore this requirement, then that congregation can no longer worship God acceptably. If it can, then those congregations in New Testament times could have done so, and if this be true, when they appointed "elders in every church" and "every city" they did that which was needless and absurd, which would prove that the very organization of the church of Christ is unnecessary. But I am not prepared to subscribe to that idea. Here then we have an office (and an office it is) which is so high, and God-honored that no one can fill it but the very highest, purest, and best of men; and God only was capable of stating who was thus qualified to hold said position, which is the highest position in the highest institution in the world. And then to think that this position and work amounts to nothing! It is lamentable that there are preachers, among us, who claim that such a God-honored position is not necessary and that the church can go on and never have elders and still be acceptable to God. Is it a fact that the preachers of the church of Christ will never learn to honor God's order? Alas! Alas!

Many congregations are gullible enough to fall for the **NO ELDER** theory.

There are churches all over the land trying to get along without elders in them, and they wonder why they are not doing any better than they are. Any wonder that the King's business is not moving along faster and better than it is? His subjects are not doing his will.

History tells us that all the early churches followed the example set by the Jerusalem church in the appointment of elders and deacons. Mosheim states that, "Three or four presbyters, men of remarkable piety and wisdom, ruled these small congregations with perfect harmony."

It is thought by some historians and others, that there were among the elders or presbyters one who was termed bishop and held the position of president over the board of elders and that this person may have been the "angel," in each respective church, to whom John addressed his messages in the Revelation. Agreeing with this thought Mosheim writes as follows:

But the number of the presbyters and deacons increasing with that of the churches, and the sacred work of the ministry growing more painful and weighty, by the number of additional duties, these new circumstances required new regulations. It was then judged necessary, that one man of distinguished gravity and wisdom should preside in the council of presbyters, in order to distribute among his colleagues their several tasks, and to be a center of union to the whole society. This person was, at first, styled the angel of the church to which he belonged, but was afterward distinguished by the name of bishop, or inspector; a name borrowed from the Greek language, and expressing the principal part of the episcopal function, which was to inspect and superintend the affairs of the church. It is highly probable that the church of Jerusalem considerably numerous, and deprived of the ministry of the apostles, who were gone to instruct the other nations, was the first which chose a president or bishop; and it is no less probable that other churches followed by degrees such a respectable example.

Let none, however, confound the bishops of this primitive and golden period of the church with those of whom we read in the following ages; for though they were both distinguished by the same name, yet they differed in many respects.

This quotation from Mosheim is used as an interesting bit of history. This writer is not advocating such a procedure among

the elders in the churches now. However, from a human viewpoint, the arrangement would appear proper and advantageous; but I do not find any New Testament teaching or example that seems to warrant such a setup. However, they seem to have paid elders, or, at least we have teaching from which a church would be justified in such a practice (see J. T. Marlin on I Timothy 5:17 this book) and if a church sees fit to pay one of her elders, while he labors in the word and doctrine I would not favor giving him a name or title of rank and distinction above his fellow elders.

Did, or, was this office to continue after the apostles died?

In speaking of the bishop, in the first and second century, Dr. Mosheim states that he "Was a person who had the care of one Christian assembly. . . . In this assembly he acted, not so much with the authority of a master, as with the zeal and diligence of a faithful servant. He instructed the people, performed the several parts of a divine worship, attended the sick, and inspected the circumstances and supplies of the poor."

Conditions have always necessitated the functions of elders as is shown by the following scripture and historical facts: Paul in giving the work of an elder, writes to Titus: "Holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gain-sayers. For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:9-11).

But for the elders (rulers) in the churches, immediately succeeding the apostolic age, they, in general, would have become corrupted, both in doctrine and practice:

For, not long after Christ's ascension into heaven, several histories of his life and doctrines, full of pious frauds and fabulous wonders, were composed by persons, whose intentions, perhaps, were not bad, but whose writings discovered the greatest superstition and ignorance. Nor was this all, productions appeared which were imposed upon the world by fraudulent men, as the writings of the holy apostles.

These apocryphal and spurious writings must have produced a sad confusion, and rendered both the history and the doctrine of Christ un-

certain, had not the rulers of the church used all possible care and diligence in separating the books that were truly apostolical and divine from all that spurious trash, and conveying them down to posterity in one volume.—  
MOSHEIM

So the work of the elders as shown by Paul to Titus, and the condition as it continued after their day, only go to show the growing need of elders in the churches. And it appears to the writer, due to the fact that there are false doctrines all about us and that oftentimes our congregations become quite infested with them, that all our preachers and churches would recognize the need of the God-given order or organizations. Yet very early after the death of the last apostle, and there are some things that seem to indicate that during the lifetime of Paul the apostle, the Scriptural organization of the church began to deteriorate which appears to have been the channel through which the church made its rapid descent into her sad state of apostasy. Alas!

Note the falling away and the growth of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, with its centralization of power in the Vatican at Rome and the various ranking officials from the Pope down to the priest, in the chapter “Autonomy of the Local Congregation.”

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### THE SUMMIT

*Heaven is not gained by a single bound,  
But we build the ladder by which we rise  
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies;  
And we mount to its summit round by round.*

—J. G. HOLLAND

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## ELDERS, THE AUTHORITY FOR THEM

WHEN THE BIBLE states that, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," with all of the other statements regarding primary obedience we all conclude, very readily, that here we have authority for teaching faith, repentance, confession, and baptism for the "cleansing from . . . . old sins," and are ready to debate with those who dare to say nay. It appears somewhat strange, to this writer, that we are so quick to discern the power of the first principles and yet so slow in appreciating the power and authority of God's word when it comes to the walk of faith and church government.

From only a casual reading of the Acts and the Epistles of the New Testament, the conclusion that God has placed the elder in the organization of His church for a governmental purpose is inevitable.

It is impossible for there to be drawn a complete set of rules or laws for the purpose of governing any institution, society, body, government, or church and not to incorporate within that set of rules or laws a prescribed form of order, by which those rules or laws must be enforced. Therefore, all sets of rules or laws have, of necessity, provision made, within them, for the executive branch of government. There must be, set forth, the kind and number of officers with their authority and limitations stated in clear terms.

No firm can obtain a charter and incorporate under the laws of this state without drawing up its rules and bylaws and setting forth within them the kind of officers by which the firm shall be governed.

I therefore submit to my kind and thoughtful readers, that if God, in giving us "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" to

govern his people and his church here on earth, did not set forth the executive branch of government, He has gone down in history as having given the most incomplete set of rules or laws of any legislative body that has functioned in the history of the world.

His law is called "the perfect law of liberty," and as such, I maintain that there is provision made for the executive branch of government.

I know preachers who have set aside the authority of the elders in congregations and enthroned ministerial or evangelical authority instead. These ruling preachers, floating about over the country with "smooth and fair speech," are a menace to the cause of Christ. After having observed and experienced the effect of one of the "rule or ruin" evangelists, a few years ago, who had ordered the elders not to let me in the pulpit while he was absent from a fair city in one of the Gulf states, one of the elders of the congregation in trying to apologize for the manner in which I had been treated said: "Brother Winkler don't feel hard toward me for the way you have been treated, for I am not responsible for it. My hands are tied and I cannot help myself." Brother, we elders sin when we allow such presumptuous ministers to stack us in the corner and take the reins of the congregations in their hands. The minister is to serve as a representative of the cause of Christ, and that covers the scope of his activities as such; but the elder is to rule the congregation and inforce the law made known, to them, through the gospel.

The main objection raised to the elder in the church, is with reference to his authority; the objector stating that the word of the Lord is the highest and only authority in religion. Be it so, Amen and amen!

The civil officer has no authority or power beyond that stated in the law. While he is inforcing the law and restraining the offender he must appreciate the power of the law over himself and be careful to walk within the prescribed limits thereof. So also in all his work, the elder is limited in power to operate within the bounds of God's word; and is under the dominion of Christ for

his own salvation and an example to the flock.

Those men, who claim there are not to be elders in the church now, strike at the very foundation and organization of the divine institution, for no nation, society, or institution can stand without government, and those men going about over the country teaching the “no elder in the church of Christ” theory are anarchists, whether they mean it so or not, and are guilty of teaching anarchism which leads to the total absence or suspension of government, and to a state of chaos or the utter negation of order and to lawlessness, which leads to a disregard of law and order, and finally, at its worst, it stands for a terroristic resistance of all present government and social order. This leaven of destructive heresy is at work among the churches of Christ now and some are following this pernicious way “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth . . . holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these also turn away” (II Timothy 3:7, 5).

Under the great ruling Monarch in heaven, with his laws of government left here upon the earth, the elders are placed in supreme earthly command of the churches of Christ throughout this area and God designed that they should rule over the flock. See I Timothy 3:5; I Peter 5:2; Hebrews 13:17.

That during the period of spiritual gifts, the elders were thus gifted is safe to presume; but the points of qualification enumerated, which do not include spiritual gifts, is evidence that elders remain in the church though spiritual gifts have ceased. Moreover, the fact that God ordered evangelists to ordain elders and never recalled the order is sufficient to show that the eldership is perpetual in the church as a divine requirement. Paul’s instructions to Timothy and Titus are proof that the elders were to remain in the church throughout all time to come upon earth. Else, it looks to me that he would not have been so particular in writing about them, their qualification and duty, to young preachers, as Timothy and Titus, who had to study to be able to preach aright, if the eldership was about to cease in the church.

When the time comes that good officers, that rule well, are no longer necessary to the good of the nation and society, or good fathers to the good of their families, I might begin to think that the church might get along without God's properly ordained eldership.

If Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus and the lesson in Acts 20 do not refer to our times, then how are we to know what does?

As is shown in the discussion of deacons that the terms in the Greek do not always refer to the age of the person to whom reference is made, but to the office or function of his work, so, also, the terms from which we derive elder, pastor, presbyter, etc., do not always refer to the age of the elder, requiring that an aged person must necessarily be appointed to the eldership; but the term refers to the office of his work and it together with the points of qualification as given by Paul show that he must have an age with reference to experience in living the Christian life; hence Paul rules against the "novice," not necessarily one recently converted, but one inexperienced because he does not have that age of experience that seasons one and therefore has not been proven as Paul requires of both, elders and deacons, before they are appointed to the eldership or diaconate (I Timothy 3:10).

The Scriptures then which refer to elders may, in most instances, be taken as authority for elders, as officials, in God's church and not as references to the age of men in years, their age being in point of experience in the Christian race and not necessarily in point of years.

It may be noted here that some people live and grow faster in experience by proper application to their duties, in a short time, than others do over a long period of years. Hence a comparatively young man may be much older in knowledge and experience and ability than one many years his senior. Therefore the young man who has developed the qualification, set forth in the Scriptures, in early life is as eligible to be appointed to the eldership as an

older man. God gives the qualification and he who measures up to it is qualified regardless of age in years.

So let us not set up rulings which are absurd when reason is applied.

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### AS THE TWIG IS BENT

A little girl with shining eyes,  
 Her little face aglow:  
 Said: "Daddy, it is almost time  
     For Bible school, let's go;  
 They teach us there of Jesus' love,  
     Of how He died for all  
 Upon the cruel cross to save  
     Those who on Him call."

"Oh, no," said Daddy, "Not today,  
     I've worked hard all this week  
 And I must have one day of rest.  
     I'm going to the creek,  
 For there I can relax and rest.  
     And fishing's fine, they say.  
 So run along; don't bother me,  
     We'll go to church some day."

Months and years have passed away,  
     But Daddy hears that plea no more:—  
 "Let's go to Bible school."  
     Those childhood days are o'er.  
 And now that Daddy's growing old,  
     When life is almost through  
 He finds the time to go to church,  
     But what does daughter do?

She says: "Oh, Daddy, not today:  
     I stayed up most all night—  
 And I've just got to have some sleep.  
     Besides I look a fright.  
 Then Daddy lifts a trembling hand  
     To brush away his tears,  
 As again he hears the pleading voice  
     Distinctly through the years.  
 He sees a small girl's shining face,  
     Upturned with eyes aglow,  
 As she says, "It's time for Bible school,  
     Please, Daddy, won't you go?"

—Selected.

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ELDERS, THEIR NEED IN THE CHURCH

FOR THE PAST forty years I have been trying, a good portion of the time, to teach our race the way of the Lord. The general condition of the churches, planted here and there where I have chanced to go, has been a matter of no little concern with me.

Many, many of the congregations scattered throughout the land seem to be satisfied to merely eke out a miserable existence. There is no management of affairs; Dick, Tom, and Harry each want their own way; and Jack, Jimmy, and Joe have quit and refuse to do anything. And the very suggestion of a business meeting would brand one as a digressive.

Brethren, something is radically wrong and I think I have long seen the trouble and have tried to contribute some aid. The burden of my preaching, for many years, has been to the church. The want of a live active eldership in the congregations is largely responsible for the present condition and I am venturing to write a series of articles on that subject. As will be noted in different connections, during the writing of this series of articles on the eldership, there are many preachers, among us, who place a big interrogation point after the word elder.

Seemingly, there are as many conflicting ideas regarding the elder, his qualification, appointment, place, authority, and duty in the church of Christ, as there are preachers in the pulpits of our congregations. There has been so little investigating and so much guessing among our brethren on this great subject that it has become, to quite a few, a lost art; with others a complicated and difficult problem with which they refuse to grapple; and still with others it remains an untaught question until the fog clouds of doubt, the mist of skepticism and blindness, have so obscured and

secreted it away to some hidden and unknown spot that some are emboldened to assert that there is no such thing in the church on earth today as an elder.

The chapters in this book setting forth studies along many lines of thought may not comprise an exhaustive study of the subject in hand; but it is our aim to make the study comprehensive enough to let the day dawn and the morning sun of righteousness burst through and drive away the mist and fog, shedding light on the organization of God's Church, that his ministers may see with the eyes of their understanding and cast away human rule and restore in every church of Christ, in the land, that divinely fixed order.

God has ever had men whom he placed in authority over his people, and as proof of this statement, so far as the Jewish Theocracy is concerned, we now note that there was a great work to be done under the law and God chose seventy men of Israel to assist Moses in this matter and he called them elders. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses had advised him to make a selection of men with certain qualifications and set them over certain numbers of men in Israel so that he would be relieved of the great task of ruling all Israel by himself, for the work was too hard for one man. You may read this account in Exodus 18:17-26. Jethro bade Moses "God speed" saying "And God be with thee." God approved the plan suggested by Jethro and in Numbers 11:17, 24, 25 we read thus: "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Gather unto thee seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people and officers over them; and bring them unto the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there; and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone. . . . And Moses went out, and told the people the words of Jehovah: and he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tent. And Jehovah came down in the cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the

Spirit that was upon him, and put it upon the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, but they did so no more."

There were at all times men of the elders in Israel, who were recognized as rulers or men of authority. Even in that remote age, God required of these men certain points of qualification as we here note: "Able men," "Such as fear God," "Men of truth," "Hating unjust gain" (Exodus 18:21).

Rulers are an absolute necessity. There was a great work to be done. God chose these men to do that work, and he called them elders. And Paul in speaking of faithful men says in Hebrews 11:2, "For therein the elders had witness borne to them." To whom did Paul refer, if not to these chosen and appointed by the Lord to be rulers over his people?

In all institutions, societies, and governments there are rulers, or laws, regulating the work or function of those bodies and governing their members or subjects. That these rules, regulations, or laws may be enforced, good order maintained, and the violator or offender restrained and disciplined, there are always, and must be, qualified officers placed over each institution, society, or government—the church of Christ not excepted.

But for the officers of the law, to see that the law is enforced and the offender restrained, this whole nation would be thrown into a state of chaos within twenty-four hours and rendered an unsafe place in which to live.

We had as well place the laws on the statute books and give everyone a copy and tell him to obey it and be orderly, and hope for good order to be maintained without officers over them as to give every member of the church a Bible and tell him to obey it and maintain good order in the church and hope for all things to run smoothly without officers to rule the church and enforce discipline. But that is just what some preachers have argued with me.

The elder is God's appointed officer, in his church, to enforce the law and maintain order in the kingdom.

All bodies and institutions must have both legislative and executive branches of government, and the church of Christ is no exception. Legislative being applied to the organ or organs of government which make the laws, and the executive, to that which carries them into effect or secures their due performance. The Lord and his apostles constituted the legislative branch of government, and when their work as legislators or law makers was completed the great legislative body adjourned or ceased to function as such, the law having been placed upon the statute book, never to be amended, and left as unalterable as the law of the Medes and Persians and as unchangeable as the eternal God. And as the Lord and his apostles have gone from the earth, the only rulers left in the church are the elders, shepherds, or overseers, etc. The membership of the church of Christ consists of, at least, three classes, namely, elders, deacons, and members. And Paul addresses his epistle to these three classes at Philippi in the first verse of the letter.

The elder holds an official position and his qualification for such office is given by Paul. His whole duty may be summed up in one comprehensive expression, namely “Feed the church of God.”

A Scriptural eldership is a necessity for the good of every congregation of Christians. The elder must “Take care of the church of God” (I Timothy 3:5). “Exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9); and “Feed the flock of God” as overseers and shepherds (I Peter 5:2).

The church is referred to as a family, and the new converts as babes in that family. Now, these babes are not able nor are they supposed to feed themselves, hence elders are to feed them. They must also be protected from the wolves, and here comes in, again, the work of the elders. False teachers arise in the church and the babes are not able to manage them, so the elders must come to their help, again, here. See Acts 20:28-30. There are sick rooms that need all sorts of work. Church work is to do good to all men, especially to the members of the body (Galatians 6:10). The

naked are to be clothed and the hungry are to be fed. The fatherless and widows are to be visited in their afflictions. The gospel is to be preached and many other things are to be done, and one needs living examples by his side to direct his life. Thousands like the above with countless numbers of babes in Christ are dying for want of church organization and government which the eldership is designed to accomplish or perfect.

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#### “FULLNESS OF HOPE”

*One sweetly, solemn thought comes to me o'er and o'er,  
I'm nearer my home today than ever I've been before.  
Nearer my Father's house where the many mansions be,  
Nearer the great white throne, near the crystal sea.*

*Nearer the bound of life,  
Where we lay our burdens down.*

*Nearer leaving the cross,  
Nearer gaining the crown.*

—Author unknown

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## ELDERS, THEIR QUALIFICATION—NUMBER ONE

WE HAVE now come to that point in this investigation where justice to the subject demands that we look into the qualification and appointment of elders.

It is thoughtfully, prayerfull, and cautiously that I enter upon the discussion of a question of such magnitude. I am fully conscious that I am now approaching mooted territory and that this article might occasion even greater discussion than heretofore has been.

Many write on this subject, seemingly, without giving it one serious thought; but after having almost racked my brain, studying and discussing this subject since 1920, I am able to approach the task with a degree of confidence; otherwise I would have no right to claim space upon the printed page.

All must agree that this is, verily, a most vital question; for if we err in appointing unqualified men to the eldership we have missed the mark, sinned against God, and become a menace to His Church. There are preachers among us, especially the younger ones, who often go to a neglected field and find a few members who are so dead they had not moved, religiously, for several years, and after preaching a week or ten days and baptizing some fifteen or twenty, they proceed to organize the church and of these dead members, and babes, appoint elders and deacons, and then advertise their grave mistake in a report to some religious journal.

Paul in writing of the deacons said: "And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless" (I Timothy 3:10). From the word "also" we see that those who are appointed elders must be proved before they are to be appointed. This is the teaching of the term "also" together with the expres-

sion "if any man is blameless," for how may we know a man is blameless, if he has not been proved by his faith and good works before our eyes? It is claimed by some that we cannot find men in the church today who have the qualification, in all respects, as specified by the apostle, and therefore we cannot have elders in the church now for want of material. Still others claim (and this argument has been made to me) that Brother A has some of the qualities, and Brother B has others and Brother C still others that A and B do not have and that by appointing all three of these men to the eldership you would have in all three of them all the points of qualification and would therefore have a qualified eldership. I have been told by such reasoners that this is why the Book requires a plurality of men. Brethren, such reasoning is dangerously absurd and the height of folly. God wants men who possess, each one of them, all the points of qualification as he inspired Paul to give them. I have often stated, and do not now have cause to retract, that if there cannot be found, in the church of Christ today, men who meet Paul's requirements of an elder, we have a very poor set of Christians on earth today and that righteousness has reached a very low ebb.

#### POINT OF DEFICIENCY

Yet that there are some elders who are not as proficient as others I admit. Paul said, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor," etc. This implies, may I suggest, that there were, or would be some elders that did not rule as well as others but were somewhat deficient along some lines at least. I make mention of this to let Paul answer the man that claims that God expects for every elder to possess, to the fullest degree, every point of qualification mentioned by him. But each elder must meet all the requirements to some appreciable degree before he may be appointed to the eldership and approved by the Lord.

#### INSPIRATION NOT NECESSARY TO THE ELDERSHIP

Not a few brethren contend that the primitive elder was inspired and that inspiration was a necessary requisite to the elder-

ship. But it is not clear that inspiration and miracle working power was necessary to qualify elders for their work any more than spiritual gifts among the Corinthian brethren were necessary to qualify them for living the Christian life, and who ventures to take the stand that they could not live that life, by faith, without those gifts?

Timothy and Titus could and did appoint elders. They could not impart to them miraculous power. So the work of the elders appointed by them was only ordinary and not miraculous.

#### AS TO ONCE AN ELDER ALWAYS AN ELDER

Some go so far as to claim that if a man is ever an elder he must remain so and there is no way to get him out. I would say that one gets out of the eldership just like he gets into it, only differently, or in reverse. That is, he gets in by qualification and appointment and he gets out by becoming disqualified and being deposed by the church or those who appoint him. If the church is under obligation to appoint elders of those only who have the qualification, would it not also be the duty of the church to depose those who have given up some of the points of qualification? In other words, would it not be as great a sin, in the sight of the Lord, for the church to retain disqualified elders as it would be for that church to appoint unqualified elders in the first place?

Some brethren who are unable to see how a man can attain to that high standard of blamelessness as required by the apostle go so far as to assert that the qualification is bestowed upon the elders.

A gifted writer among us wrote as follows: "The setting apart was the bestowal of qualifications which alone could separate or set apart." I reject the above statement on the following grounds: When God set the apostles apart to make of them lawgivers he bestowed upon them the Holy Spirit which was to inspire and guide them in giving the law. Yet the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, independent of all else, was not to qualify them as apostles; for they must have certain points of qualification before the bestowal of the Holy Spirit. They must be men who had journeyed with the

Lord as he went in and out among them, witnessing the miracles which he did. He also must have seen the Lord after he was risen, and, therefore, be an eye witness of his resurrection. "Of the men therefore that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:21-22). So giving the Holy Spirit to me, so that I could speak by inspiration would not, and could not, make of me an apostle of our Lord, for I do not have the one great point of qualification of having seen the Lord.

So the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles was not to qualify them as such; but was to enable them to speak accurately, the word of the Lord and to confirm that word, as spoken by them, among men, by miraculous demonstrations (See Mark 16:20).

And when Paul told Timothy and Titus to appoint elders, or executors of the law, they were told to look for men who had the qualification beforehand, which is proof that the appointment of elders, or officers in the church of Christ is not the bestowal of the required qualification.

The next article will deal directly with the qualification of elders as mentioned by the apostle.

## ELDERS, THEIR QUALIFICATIONS—NUMBER Two

I COME now to notice the qualification of elders. The reader will note that I speak of it as qualification, singular, and the points of qualification, instead of the qualifications, plural. I believe there is only one basic qualification required of an elder, namely, "Blamelessness."

Paul told Titus to appoint elders, "If any man is blameless." And to Timothy he said: "The bishop therefore must be without reproach." "Blamelessness" and "without reproach" express the same thought.

Many in speaking and writing of the qualification say, "must be blameless" is one of the qualifications of an elder. When as a matter of fact that is the only qualification. Paul says the elder must be blameless and then proceeds to mention those points in which he must be blameless in order to have the required qualification of blamelessness.

The points of greatest concern, to some, in speaking of the qualification, seem to be as to whether the elder must absolutely be a married man. And more than that, whether he must have children who are members of the one body. And it seems that if they can get straight on these items they will have no difficulty with the others. Learned and great men have labored on either side, of this controversy, trying to refute the arguments and claims presented by the other. I could quote authors of ability who hold that Paul was giving a positive requirement that elders must be married men. And, also, others just as great and learned who contend that Paul was only giving a restrictive or prohibitive clause in order to protect and safeguard the eldership from falling into the hands of polygamists, who had been con-

verted to Christianity, and men living in adultery, who had put away their wives and married others, and thus wield an unwholesome influence over the church and the world, and thus bring reproach upon the cause of Christ and retard the progress of the gospel in general.

It has ever occurred to the writer that this latter set of authors have the correct understanding of Paul's teaching. My reason for this is now briefly submitted for your careful consideration.

#### HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE

Johnson, in his notes, gives a fair statement of the general position taken on this clause: "In those loose times of divorce, men might be converted who had successively several wives. Divorce for unscriptural reasons would not free a man from his first lawful wife. Hence the limitation to those who had only one living wife." He also adds: "A married man, and having only one wife."

Adam Clarke wrote as follows: "The apostle's meaning appears to be this: that he should not be a man who has divorced his wife and married another; nor one that has two wives at a time." He also says: "He must be the husband of one wife. He should be a married man, but he should be no polygamist." Now if he is right when he says, "He must be the husband of one wife," he has no right to say "He should be a married man," for if he "must," he just "must" and "should" is not to be considered at all, for putting "should" for "must" when God has spoken leads man to err from truth and God.

Now if the teaching of Paul here is restrictive, limiting the elder to only one wife and is given as a stroke at polygamy, (and this is evidently the force of Paul's statement) then it must not be taken as teaching that he "must" be married to be an elder. If the teaching of this passage is that the elder must be married; then the clause "The husband of one wife," may be taken that he must have at least one wife, and may have more, so far as this passage is concerned if it is not a restrictive

clause. Now please understand that statement before passing judgment.

The term "must" does not refer to "the husband of one wife," but to "blameless," "must be blameless." And the teaching is evidently this: regarding the institution of marriage and women the elder must be blameless. Therefore the single man who has committed no adultery, and also the married man with only one wife who has kept himself free from other women are both blameless. In either case the elder would be blameless as relating to the other sex and would meet Paul's requirement.

For one to make "must" refer to "the husband of one wife," oftentimes forces him into absurdities. For instance, I was working, a few years ago, with a congregation in Kentucky, where the wife of one of the elders died and he was deposed from the eldership on the ground that he had no wife; just like the death of his wife, over which he had no control, would disqualify the man for an elder in God's Church.

If Paul teaches here that the elder "must" be married, then how are we to reconcile this teaching with that of his in I Corinthians 7:32-34 that the unmarried man and woman can serve God better than the married: "But I would have you to be free from cares. He that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married is careful for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and is divided. So also the woman that is unmarried and the virgin is careful for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married is careful for the things of the world, how she may please her husband."

Moreover it is claimed, by some, that the mention of "children" and "ruling his own house," give emphasis to the thought that the elder must be a married man. Some have really claimed, the mention of children means he must have at least two, or a plurality of children, to be an elder.

Now lets suppose a case, which doubtless has often happened: an elder has two children one of whom dies, leaving him with

only one child. Would he be disqualified on the ground that he did not have children (plural)?

There are many things in the religion of Christ that human reason cannot account for; yet there is no teaching in the Bible that human reason can reduce to an absurdity. And that is just what may result when we consider the above thoughts if we hold to the position that Paul taught that the elder "must" of necessity be married.

God wants men of integrity who, when these cases and conditions present themselves, will do as Paul requires in such cases.

It is generally conceded that Paul was an unmarried man; and yet it is clear (to this scribe) that he was a presbyter, which was an elder. Proof: The gift that was in Timothy is said to have been given "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." (I Tim. 4:14), and in II Timothy 1:6, Paul speaks of "the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands."

Now if Paul was not a presbyter, or an elder, these two scriptures prove that Timothy had two different gifts and the burden of proof on that point turns to those who claim that an elder "must" of necessity be a married man.

#### APT TO TEACH

The elder who has acquired all of the other qualities is blame-worthy if he is not "apt to teach." Moreover a man who has attained to this high standard of living will be "apt to teach" which means "One capable of teaching; not only wise himself but ready to communicate his wisdom to others. One whose delight is to instruct the ignorant and those who are out of the way."—Clarke.

As to other points of qualification, the use of a good dictionary will soon show to all, whether certain men are qualified, in those points for the eldership.

How a man deportes himself in all those things mentioned by Paul will govern his "good report of them which are without," in most cases at least. Yet if this great and godly man has an evil report, before the world, through a falsehood started on him,

it seems that he should not be appointed to the eldership for the influence of the report, would hinder the cause.

The points in which the elder must be blameless are listed below for your study:

To TIMOTHY

1. Husband of one wife
2. Temperate
3. Sober-minded
4. Orderly
5. Given to hospitality
6. Apt to teach
7. No brawler
8. No striker
9. Gentle
10. Not contentious
11. No lover of money
12. One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity
13. Not a novice
14. Good testimony from them that are without  
To Trrus—those not given to Timothy
15. Not soon angry
16. Not self-willed
17. Lover of good
18. Just
19. Holy
20. Self-controlled
21. Holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching

## “HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE”

DISPERSED through several chapters in this book are the author's remarks on the significance of the Apostle's statement of the above caption.

Many will want a forthright statement from me setting out in a straightforward way my reason for holding so tenaciously to the position that “husband of one wife” is not meant to be taken to mean the elder must of necessity be a married man.

I agree that the reader has a perfect right to know this and you shall be accommodated as I never take, or hold, a position for which I am unwilling to give a reason.

### NEGATIVELY

1. This position is not taken for the purpose of being different from my brethren.
2. Not for wanting it to appear that I have made a new discovery; for able men who have passed over the river held a position in common with mine before I began studying the question.
3. Not for evasion, seeking to hedge around some tenet of truth for which I hold a distaste.
4. Neither, as some have thought, that I have had unmarried friends I wanted to maneuver into the eldership of the church of our Lord. (See what I have to say about this in another chapter.)
5. Nor is it because I know of an elder whose wife has died who I want to see retained in the eldership.
6. Nor yet is it because I know of a good member whose wife has died that I want to see appointed an elder.

7. None of the above nor for any other reason of a personal preference may be lodged against the author as his reason for contending the Scriptures do not teach the necessity for an elder in the church of God to be joined to a wife.

It is not to be assumed, however, that I would encourage the churches to begin looking among the unmarried for elder material. Most men are married and under normal conditions I would not encourage either boys or girls to plan to live a life of celibacy. But there are exceptions to the rule and some good men and women have chosen to go through life without taking upon themselves the obligations of married life and a family.

#### PLEASE TRY

Be not concerned nor be surprised,  
If what you do is criticized,  
They're always folks who usually can,  
Find some fault with every plan.  
Mistakes are made we can't deny,  
But only made by folks who try.

—J. D. CARLYLE

#### POSITIVELY

It is not the purpose of this article to argue any of the points, other than what may seem, on the face of it, to be an argument; but the idea just here is to give the reader a synopsis of the points which he will find scattered through many of the chapters herein contained.

This question was discussed whenever and wherever it put itself before the writer for disposal.

The author has a firm conviction that "husband of one wife" is prohibitive in its setting rather than expressing a positive requirement for the elder in the New Testament Church to be a married man for the following reasons:

1. That "husband of one wife" modifies "must be without reproach" (I Timothy 3:2), and "must be blameless" (Titus 1:7), expressing a quality of blamelessness, or, a relationship in which he must be without reproach. And we know that a single man

can be, and is blameless regarding the opposite sex if he is free from all forms of adultery which, no doubt, is the requirement of the clause being considered.

The point the Holy Spirit was seeking to establish is "blamelessness" and we know one may be blameless regarding woman-kind without being married to one. That being true, then there is no point in requiring one to be married to attain a characteristic which may be reached without it. Therefore, instead of "husband of one wife" being a positive requirement for the elder to be married it is only prohibitive, placing a limit upon the number of wives one may have; thus safeguarding the purity of the organization of the church by barring the adulterer, the fornicator, the polygamist, and him who has divorced his mate and married another without scriptural right.

So the very nature of the problem here considered forces me to the conclusion herein expressed.

2. The apostles and their co-laborers were going hither and yon among the heathen nations preaching their new doctrine, of Jesus and the resurrection, converting people from paganism, various forms of idolatry and Jewry. Many in those days practiced indiscriminate divorce and remarriage and polygamy. It cannot be doubted that many of those involved in unscriptural marriages embraced this new religion. And such a radical change over in the lives of many of those new converts demanded much teaching and training with patience to make them see how incompatible the two religions were.

And to safeguard the churches from the evil influence growing out of men involved in unscriptural marriages being elevated to the eldership the limitation "husband of one wife" was given to prohibit or bar the adulterer or polygamist from that exalted and influential position.

The change over to the new religion seems to have been gradual; for even the Gentiles were not informed of their inclusion in the redemption by Christ for some eight years after the kingdom was established, and then even Peter, still not under-

standing his own statement on Pentecost, had to see a vision and hear a voice from heaven to convince him to preach to Gentiles. And it was still later before the "New name" was placed upon the disciples by divine authority (Acts 11:26).

3. The elder is also called a shepherd. Jesus Christ is "The Chief Shepherd" (I Peter 5:4). He the Chief Shepherd was not married and if the Chief Shepherd was not married on what basis of reasoning would it be necessary for the under, or common, shepherd to be married to be blameless?

4. There can, and did in Paul's time, arise a condition in the affairs of human life under which a single man and a single woman can serve God better than one with the cares of a married relation (See I Corinthians 7:25-35, especially verses 32-35). And inasmuch as the apostle used the personal pronouns "he," "his," "she," and "her," without qualification or limitation it is clear that this may apply to the elder as well as to any other man or woman in the church, which excludes the necessity for the elder to be married.

5. What is necessary to render a man blameless at the time of his appointment must be maintained throughout his tenure as an elder in order to keep him blameless. So then, if a man *MUST* be the "husband of one wife" at the time he is appointed to the eldership he *MUST* remain the "husband of one wife" in order to the maintenance of that blamelessness.

But if the elder's wife dies he is no longer the "husband of one wife." Does that, a thing over which he has no control and for which he is not responsible, render the elder blameworthy? If so, then the churches should depose every elder whose wife dies unless he remarries immediately. And that is just what the Old Hebron Church near Russellville, Kentucky, did when the wife of Elder John Lyons died. Do you say that is absurd? To one of my conviction it is; but to him who holds to the "positive" requirement that an elder *must* have a wife to qualify for the eldership it is consistent.

6. As is discussed under another heading, it is hard for me

to get away from the idea that Paul was an elder. And if I am correct in the reasoning that he was, then as he was not "the husband of one wife" shows the positive view of the clause to be erroneous.

7. If "husband of one wife" is a positive requirement then there is no escape from the teaching that "having children that believe" is a positive requirement for the elder to have children. But there are good men and women, blameless before God, who are not capable of having children. For about one woman in twenty and one man in fifty are barren.

This writer knows of good blameless men who have aspired to be elders and lived and worked in the church and prepared themselves in both learning and living for that office. But through no fault of their own have no children. Men who have acquired that one great qualification of "blamelessness" and yet barred from serving the church in a much needed capacity only because of a false interpretation based upon a misunderstanding of Scripture.

8. In discussing the qualification of the elder Paul uses the clause "husband of one wife," in I Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6.

And in giving the qualification of the deacon he says "Let deacons be husbands of one wife" (1 Timothy 3:12).

And those who claim the language expresses a necessity that the elder be a married man *also* hold the same position regarding the deacon. And so would I if I were of that same persuasion.

But lets look into the statement:

"Let deacons be husbands of one wife." If that expresses a positive obligation that the deacon be a married man, "The husband of one wife" expresses the same thought also of the elder. Then, what about Paul's language in I Corinthians 7:2, "Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband."

If "the husband of one wife" is positive; "Let deacons be husbands of one wife" is also positive.

And if that be true there is no escape from the conclusion that

"Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband" are also positive, which renders it impossible for an unmarried man or woman to be a Christian.

According to the two statements I conclude that if unmarried men cannot be elders or deacons, neither can unmarried men and women be Christians.

If the clause is positive, the apostle by the use of "each man" and "each woman" includes every member of the church and therefore the unmarried man or woman cannot be a Christian and be saved.

Is this sound reasoning?

#### CRITICISM

It is easy enough to pick out flaws  
In the work that others have done;  
To sneer at the little they have achieved  
When your own task you haven't begun.  
It is easy enough to fuss and find fault  
When others are doing their best;  
To point out errors that others have made  
When you have done nothing but rest.  
It is easy enough to cavil and carp,  
To criticize, scoff, and deride,  
For few of us ever have done perfect work  
No matter how hard we have tried.  
It is easy enough not to think of the best,  
And to dwell all the time on the worst;  
And perhaps it is proper sometimes to find fault,  
But be sure that You have done something first.

*—Selected*

I found it quite difficult even in giving this synopsis, of what is discussed elsewhere, to write without some argumentation which I thought to avoid.

#### A BACHELOR ELDER AND THE AFTERMATH

About 1904-1906 Brother John D. Evans was preaching at North Spruce Street Church, now the Eighth Avenue Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee. The author was baptized there on June 6, 1904, by Brother L. M. Jackson.

Brother Evans was advanced in years and was a bachelor. A short time later he moved to Denver, Colorado, and if I am correctly informed he started the first mission in that city which struggled along for quite some time. There were many pleas made through the *Gospel Advocate* with some helpful responses, and finally at this time I understand that there are some ten or more good congregations in that city and its environs.

In perfecting the New Testament organization of one of the churches there—and I presume it was the first one—Brother Evans was made one of the elders. Then, as now, there arose a protest against appointing an unmarried man to the presbytery and Brother Evans was the target.

This controversy led on to some heated argumentation among the preachers and finally two positions were played up in the columns of the *Gospel Advocate* with Brother H. Leo Boles holding to the positive teaching on "the husband of one wife," that it was necessary for a man to have a wife to qualify for the eldership; while Brother J. C. McQuiddy held that the clause is only prohibitive, expressing a limitation as to the number of wives a man could have, to qualify; and the Holy Spirit was not giving a necessary requirement that one must be married to be an elder.

The reader will now be privileged to look over some of those articles that appeared on the pages of the *Gospel Advocate* and after all arguments have been carefully weighed I think most candid minds will see that the pendulum swings past center in favor of the conviction of this writer along with that of Brother McQuiddy and others known to be of the same persuasion.

But I do not understand that a man who is childless, through no fault of his own, is on that account barred from being an elder in the church.

J. C. MCQUIDDY, in *Gospel Advocate*, May 18, 1916

Again, while it is decidedly better and more in harmony with the work of an elder for him to have a companion in the same faith, I know of no scripture that teaches that on this account, provided there is nothing else against him, he could not do the work of an elder.

J. C. MCQUIDDY, in *Gospel Advocate*, March 4, 1920, p. 222

Brother McQuiddy gave the above in answer to a question on whether it was right for an elder to marry out of the church. This writer does not believe it is right for any Christian to marry out of the church.

*Brother McQuiddy:* Does an elder have to have children, members of the body of Christ, before he can serve as elder, scripturally? If so, give chapter and verse.—C. E. HAMILTON

"The bishop therefore, must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach; . . . . one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the house of God?)" (I Tim. 3:2-5). As polygamy was at one time practiced, the general opinion is that the Scriptures forbid an elder's having a plurality of wives, and that it is not an actual requisite that he be the husband of one wife, provided he is otherwise qualified for the position of an elder. It is generally taught that an elder, if he has children, must have them in obedience, but that it is not actually necessary for a man to be the father of children in order to be an elder. It is true, however, that the man who is the husband of one wife and who has faithful, obedient children will very likely have the qualifications of an elder more than the one who has not. God called Abraham to the work which he assigned him because he knew that he would command his children after him. He says in Gen. 18:19: "For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

J. C. McQUIDDY in *Gospel Advocate*, August 16, 1917, p. 795

C. S. Hawkins, of Auburntown, Tenn., wishes to know if it would be according to the Scriptures to appoint as elder a man not married, but who possesses the other qualifications as laid down in the New Testament for an elder. The Bible nowhere says that an elder must be a married man. It does say that he must be "the husband of one wife," which means that, if married, he must not be the husband of two wives or of three wives, and that he must not be divorced from a number of wives. Unfortunately, in the days of the New Testament polygamy was practiced by the people and divorces were freely given without the Scriptural cause. Some women had many husbands and some men had many wives. Men who were divorced from wives or had more than one living wife were not qualified for elders.

J. C. McQUIDDY in *Gospel Advocate*, October 14, 1920, p. 999

## CAN AN UNMARRIED MAN BE A SCRIPTURAL ELDER?

BY H. LEO BOLES

In answer to the above question, Brother J. C. McQuiddy has the following to say in the *Gospel Advocate* of October 14, 1920, in the "Query Department:"

Here, Brother Boles quotes the entire answer Brother McQuiddy made to C. S. Hawkins given immediately above and proceeds with his criticism as follows:

In the above quotation, Brother McQuiddy states: "The Bible nowhere says that an elder must be a married man. It does say that he must be the husband of one wife, which means that, if married, he must not be the husband of two wives or of three wives, and that he must not be divorced from a number of wives." The statement expresses that it is not necessary for an elder to be a married man. I think that Brother McQuiddy is clearly in the wrong. Such teaching, I believe, is contrary to the will of God as revealed to us through the New Testament. The elder is spoken of in the New Testament under the names of "bishop," "presbyter," "shepherd," "overseer." These titles give a clearer view of the character, function, and relation of the elder. The name "elder" shows that he is to be selected from among the older class of men. This implies that he has arrived at the age to be classed among the married men. "The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife; . . . one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the house of God?) not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (I Tim. 3:2-6). Again, Paul, in giving instruction to Titus about appointing elders, says: "If any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly" (Tit. 1:6). This shows that the elder is not only to be selected from the aged, but that he is to be the head of a family, "The husband of one wife," who has children which are old enough to be Christians and who have been trained by the father and have become Christians. The experience and responsibility of a Christian father have developed him so that he is prepared to take charge of the house of God. I do not say that his wife must be living at the time that he is selected, but the Scriptures do clearly teach that he must be a father and not a polygamist.

The expression "the husband of one wife" is as emphatic as that he must be without reproach, not self-willed, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, etc. One of these qualifications is as definite as the other. This interpretation of the expression "the husband of one wife" is given and sanctioned by Biblical scholars. I submit quotations from scholars and

commentaries as proof of the proposition that *the elder must be a married man.*

The Greek word used here for "husband" is *andros*, which comes from the Greek word *anevr*, and, as used in I Timotheus 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6, means "husband" as given by Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. Adam Clarke says that this expression means: "He should be a married man, but he should be no polygamist; and have only one wife—that is, one at a time. It does not mean that, if he has been married, and his wife die, he should never marry another. .... The apostle's meaning appears to be this: that he should not be a man who has divorced his wife and married another, nor one that has two wives at a time." (*Clarke's Commentary on I Timothy*)

A commentary prepared by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown has the following to say on this point: "It is implied here also that he who has a wife and virtues is to be preferred to a bachelor; for who is himself bound to discharge the domestic duties mentioned here is likely to be more attractive to those who have similar ties, for he teaches them not only by precept, but also by example.

The Jews teach, a priest should be neither unmarried nor childless, lest he be unmerciful." (*Commentary on I Timothy*)

Conybeare and Howson, in the "*Life Time and Travels of St. Paul*," comment as follows on this expression: "In the corrupt facility of divorce allowed both by the Greek and Roman law, it was very common for a man and wife to separate, and marry other parties, during the life of one another. Thus a man might have two or three living wives; or, rather, women who had all successively been his wives. .... We believe that it is this kind of successive polygamy, rather than simultaneous polygamy, which is here spoken of as disqualifying for the presbyterate."

I find only one authority that dissents from the above interpretation, and that is Macknight, a Scotch Presbyterian, who tries to uphold the Presbyterian Church, which is based on the presbytery. He seems to be confused in his attempt to explain away a clear statement of the apostle Paul. Macknight first says: "Therefore a bishop ought to be free from blame; the husband of one wife at a time," etc. Again, in his notes, he says: "The apostle's meaning, therefore, in these canons is, that such persons only are to be intrusted with sacred offices, who, in their married state, have contented themselves with one wife and with one husband at a time; because thereby they have showed themselves temperate in the use of sensual pleasures."

After stating the above, he then says: "The direction I have been considering does not make it necessary, to one's being a bishop, that he be a married person. .... The apostle's meaning is, that if such a person be married, he must, as was observed above, have only one wife at a time. .... Now although it be not necessary to one's being a bishop that he be married, yet if a young unmarried man be made a bishop, it may be proper,

for avoiding temptation, that he marry, if he have not the gift of continency."

Again, Macknight, commenting on I Timothy 5:16, says: "As it was required in a bishop that he should be a husband that he might have some experience in the affairs of life, so the female teacher was to be a widow; .... and as it was required that a bishop should be the husband but of one wife at a time, so it was ordered that a widow should have been the wife but of one husband at a time."

This shows that when Macknight lets his scholarship guide him in his interpretation, he says that a bishop is required to be a husband; but when his theology guides him, he says it is not necessary for the bishop to be a married man. It appears to me that the New Testament is clear enough in stating that the bishop must be the husband of one wife. You will note that Macknight also states that a young unmarried man may be an elder. This, to my mind, is a contradiction of the term "elder."

I have submitted the above in love for the truth and for the instruction of all who may be interested in coming to a full knowledge and clear understanding of what the will of the Lord is.

—*Gospel Advocate*, December 9, 1920, pp. 1188-1189

David R. Wells, Mount Olivet, Ky., writes: "I have the *Gospel Advocate* of December 9 before me, and having read your and Brother H. Leo Boles' articles on whether or not an elder must be a married man, and seeing the scripture that you both quoted says he *MUST* be 'the husband of one wife,' and being a great lover of God's truth without addition or subtraction, and being limited in my education, I want to ask one question: Is it possible for a man to be the husband of *ONE* wife and not be married?"

"Those who do not accept the plain statement of the Bible that an elder must be "the husband of one wife" contend that an elder "must be a married man," which is the equivalent of "the husband of one wife." Certainly he who is the husband of one wife is a married man, and so is he a married man who is the husband of two wives or of three wives, as the case may be. Hence, it follows that if the Bible had said an elder "must be a married man," he could have been the husband of two or three wives and have filled the qualification. This is not what the Bible teaches; and when any one says that an elder "must be a married man," he perverts the meaning of the Scripture which says that he must be "the husband of one wife." When this language was penned, there were men in the church who had a plurality of wives. The evidence of profane and sacred history is clear upon this point. The Holy Scriptures simply meant that a man, in order to be an elder, must be the husband of *ONE* wife and not *two*."

J. C. McQUIDDY in *Gospel Advocate*, January 27, 1921, p. 97

Some hold that this means that the deacon, as well as the elder, must be a married man. David Lipscomb, in reply to the question, "Must a deacon be a married man?" answered: "We do not think that language intended to require they should be married and have children; but as that was the

common state of man, directions were given as to what kind of wives and children they should have. If it was prohibitory, Paul was unfit for a deacon; and he recommended that those who could restrain their passions should refrain from marriage that they might devote themselves exclusively to the service of God. The deacon is a servant of God and the church. That construction would present the case that Paul (1 Cor. 7:30-35) recommended them to pursue, a course to fit them for service of God; yet the course he recommended prohibited their doing the service in some most important functions and positions."

J. C. McQUIDDY in *Gospel Advocate*, June 9, 1921, p. 550

I am requested to answer the following questions through the *Gospel Advocate*: "If a brother is appointed elder in the church with a believing wife and children, and after a time his wife or children turn from the faith does that disqualify or make him lose his office as elder in the church of God?" (See I Tim. 3:11; Tit. 1:6)

The Scriptures referred to read: "Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things" (I Tim. 3:11). "If any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly" (Titus 1:6). Surely God does not stop his faithful servants from serving him because a wife or children apostatize and fall away. "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). God did not take Eli and Samuel out of the priesthood because they had bad children. Should we demand that a faithful elder resign a duty because his wife or children die? Such action would not be supported by the Bible, common sense, or by custom.

David Lipscomb correctly taught that it was not absolutely necessary for an elder to have a wife and children. He says: "We believe an unmarried or childless man, if otherwise qualified, may be a bishop or a deacon. I think where the Scripture says 'the husband of one wife,' it means he must have but one wife and be true to her. Then he speaks of his having children. It means, since the rule was to have children, if he has them, he must rule them well. "But if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the house of God?" (I Tim. 3:5). This shows the end of the wife and children was disciplinary to teach and train the persons for the work of caring for the house of God. Now, if a man gets his training in some other way and shows his fitness of ruling, even though he has no family of his own, shall the church be deprived of his proved talent?" ("Queries and Answers," by Lipscomb and Sewell, p. 204)

J. C. McQUIDDY in *Gospel Advocate*, July 6, 1922, p. 634

Because a man has the misfortune to lose his first wife, to marry a second time does not bar him from acting as an elder; at least, I do not understand the Scriptures so to teach.

J. C. McQUIDDY in *Gospel Advocate*, January 27, 1921, p. 97

J. T. J. Watson sends the following for the "Query Department":

"By what authority do you occasionally say the Scripture does NOT say an elder must be a married man? He must be 'THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE.' Of course this does imply that he must NOT be the husband of MORE than one wife, but it just as strongly implies that he MUST be the husband of ONE wife."

"Webster defines the word 'must' to mean: 'To be obliged: to be necessitated—expressing either physical or moral necessity; as, a man must eat for nourishment; we must submit to laws. To be morally required; to be necessary or essential to certain quality, character, end, or result; as, 'Likewise MUST the deacon be grave;' 'Moreover he (the bishop) MUST have a good report of them which are without.' 'If a man speaketh, let him speak as the oracles of God.' (I Pet. 4:11.)"

By the authority of the word of God I occasionally say the Scripture does not say an elder "must be a married man." "If a man speaketh, let him speak as the oracles of God." (I Pet. 4:11.)

J. C. McQuiddy in *Gospel Advocate*, November 4, 1920, p. 1078

It should be carefully noted in the quotation Brother McQuiddy made from Brother David Lipscomb that Brother Lipscomb stated that if "husband of one wife" requires that deacons be married men, then, "Paul was unfit for a deacon."

I believe "husband of one wife," conveys the same thought with regard to the deacon that it does to the elder.

It is impossible for me to accept any position of reasoning on the Word of God, as being tenable, which would bar the apostle Paul from being even a deacon (servant) in the church of our Lord on the ground of *unfitness*.

Brother David Lipscomb also said:

We believe an unmarried or childless man, if otherwise qualified, may be a bishop or a deacon. I think where the Scripture says "the husband of one wife," it means he must have but one wife and be true to her. Then he speaks of his having children. It means, since the rule was to have children, if he has them, he must rule them well.

Brother G. C. Brewer's thoughts ran as follows:

In saying that all the qualifications are to be possessed by all Christian men in some degree, it is assumed that the expression, "the husband of one wife," means the husband of but one wife. If a man insists that this requires an elder to be a married man, he would also have to insist that the third qualification mentioned in Titus requires an elder to have children;

not only that, but his children must be old enough to be believers. If they are old enough and are not believers, the man is disqualified. It seems that this is an extreme view, but it would be best to have men who are heads of families as elders if they can be had and if they possess the other qualifications."—*The Model Church*, pp. 32, 33

Generally speaking, I agree, also, with this last sentence from Brother Brewer. I am not clamoring for the appointment of bachelor elders; I am only trying to divert the minds of the brethren from a false interpretation of Paul's teaching so they may go forward in the Lord's work intelligently and wisely appointing men who possess the Scriptural qualification, though they be, as was Brother John D. Evans, bachelors unblameworthy.

Someone expressed his thoughts, to me, as follows:

A *bachelor* can *preach*, marry people, preach funerals, baptize, wait on the Lord's table, and do everything that any servant of God should do—but you must not call him an **ELDER**.

How technical and legalistic!

If the Holy Spirit expects us to follow Paul's teaching with such rigidity, how did he expect Timothy to know those *five* things mentioned to Titus but not named to Timothy? Or, how did Titus know of those *five* mentioned to Timothy that are not in his letter? Neither of these men, so far as the record shows, had access to the letter addressed to the other, at the time they were appointing elders.

#### AN INTERESTING EPISODE

Not long since I gave a series of lessons on the eldership, where I was preaching, and during one of the series I was challenged from the audience regarding my position on Paul's statement, "the husband of one wife." After some discussion, by some four or five of the auditors I turned to my challenger and asked this question: "Had you been writing the epistles to Timothy and Titus and meant for them to understand that the elder *must* be married, how would you have worded the writing?" He sat and looked me straight in the eye, saying not a word until the tenseness of the moment became great. To break the silence I

repeated the question, still without an answer. The third time I insisted upon an answer and he came back with, "I don't know." To which I replied, "Then you would not have expressed the thought as Paul did, which indicates, to my mind, that you do not fully believe that Paul meant what you attribute to him."

I then related the incident of Brother John Lyons, who was an elder at old Hebron near Russellville, Kentucky. His wife died. The church deposed him on the ground that he was not the "husband of one wife." I asked if that disqualified the man. Some said "yes" and another answered, "No, for he still had a wife in the Lord's eyes." I replied that the Lord grants the right to marry again if the companion dies. And if Brother Lyons still had a wife in the Lord's eyes, then that would be tantamount to the Lord's indorsement of adultery.

A good brother wrote me as follows:

One of the characteristics prerequisite to service as elder is that he shall be "husband of one wife." Now, there is nothing in the statement that would justify anyone in concluding that if a man is married he must not have more than one wife. Would it not be dangerous to place a man in the office of elder who had no wife as much so as to select for the office a man who is living with a plurality of wives, or a man who, having been divorced—regardless of the Scriptural justification for it—from wife number one, is married to another? Certainly.

I say NO to the above. For the man with his plurality of wives *can never be blameless* while the unmarried man *can* live a *blameless* life in keeping himself free from all forms of adultery. "Let him that readeth understand."—JESUS

#### CHILDREN BY ADOPTION

Those who hold to the idea that "husband of one wife" expresses a positive requirement that the elder be a married man claim also that they must have a plurality of (some claim at least two and some say three or more) children and that they must be members of the church. They have expressed themselves to me that children by *adoption* will not suffice, that they must be of their own flesh and blood.

In the garden God decreed "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Jesus confirmed this arrangement in preparing material for the New Dispensation: "And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:4-6). We see therefore, that the tie between husband and wife is a spiritual bond of love and is closer and greater than that between a man and his father and mother and that between a woman and her parents. While there is no blood kin between a man and his wife, whereas there is blood kin between a man and his parents and also between a woman and her parents.

Now if there is an affinity between a man and his wife which binds closer than any earthly or physical bond of blood kin is it unreasonable to conclude that it is possible also for a husband and wife to be foster parents to a child and build up an affinity at least as close as that which exists between parents and their own blood children? And does not the position now under examination, as suggested elsewhere, run the possessor into a head-on collision with all reason? Again, I say there are many things about God, heaven and the future of man which we, in our finiteness, cannot reason out and understand; yet no position is true which human reason may reduce to an absurdity. And to contend that a man, to be an elder, must of necessity have children who are his own flesh and blood, before he is blameless before God and that children by adoption whom he has reared well does not qualify him according to Paul's requirements, to me is inconsistent with the plain dictates of common sense, and is an absurd conclusion based upon a false interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and unsound reasoning.

I wonder if they, who contend for the thought that elders *must*

have a plurality of children of their own, or even one child as for that matter, would be interested in a search through the annals of ancient history, sacred or profane, striving to determine just how many children elder Peter had?

If you are thus interested and my assistance is desired please command me.

#### IN FULL APPRECIATION OF GOD AND HIS MEN

This scribe fully appreciates the fact that the New Testament Scriptures are the sole and supreme authority in the realm of religion and he accepts none other.

The position set forth in this article is, even now, being bitterly assailed by my preaching brethren, from the pulpit and over the air, in epithets which readily portray bias or prejudice against it and show a lack of knowledge and seemingly an unwillingness to stop and think the reasoning through; which does not enhance the evaluation of a speaker in the estimation of his listener.

I have dared to put this writing before the churches with my signature attached knowing that I am scheduled to become the target of criticism and I quote from some of the veterans, who have passed over the river for at least two purposes, viz.: 1. Because of the general value of their writings on this neglected teaching of gospel truth, and 2. To show that this position was held by some of my predecessors; but which position I held before I knew they were of the same belief.

If one wonders why I made all the quotations from the writings of J. C. McQuiddy, the reason is obvious. He was head of the Query Department of the *Gospel Advocate* for a long time. However, he gave us the advantage of David Lipscomb's writings by quoting from him.

This writer is glad to have been personally acquainted with Brethren J. C. McQuiddy, E. G. Sewell, Rice Sewell, E. A. Elam, David Lipscomb, James A. Harding, S. R. Logue, F. B. Srygley, J. W. Shepherd, H. Leo Boles, J. N. Armstrong and others, who have influenced my life and meant so much to me and whose memory I cherish.

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NOT A NOVICE

Below is a portion of a reply I made to a good brother about four years ago on the caption. I give it without quotation marks other than the quotations from his letter to me.

The reply follows:

I have observed for some years that there is a tendency among those who preach on the qualification of elders to place the standard so high that even the best of the brethren fear they are not up to the high standard of a superman that the preacher presents. I have had men tell me "It is impossible for man to acquire such a holy character." Now, I do not, at all, seek to minimize the importance and necessity of measuring up to the divine standard. But my contention is, that if a congregation has no one qualified for the eldership it has a very poor set of Christians; that when it comes to a matter of right living there is not one single quality required of the elder that is not elsewhere in the New Testament also required of every other Christian.

To my mind these qualities are not mentioned to show that the elder *must* stand on a pedestal far above the requirements of the other members of the body; but that it is a safeguard to the purity of the eldership and a prohibition against the admission of those who fail to measure up to the high standard of true Christianity that the ill influence does not find its way into the oversight of the church. For then, as now, there were many members who did not measure up, by far, to the high Christian standard set forth in the Scriptures. I do not think this is a quibble.

The precise point in your article I wish to mention is this: A natural conclusion from reading what you say about the *Novice* is that it requires many years of growth, after entering the church, for one to qualify for an elder. I quote you as follows:

"The Holy Spirit indicates why a recent convert should not be elevated to the presbytery. Scriptural fitness for the presbytery is the result of the building of a life in harmony with the teachings of the Saviour and is not attained suddenly through the exercise of one's will or purpose. Time is required in the process of adding the so-called Christian graces. Time is required in the building of a life that is free from the love of the world and its pleasures. It takes years of growth and development. Brethren, let us keep novices out of the presbytery. Oftentimes by nurturing and training these neophytes for a few more years they will develop into real towers not alone in the local unit, but in the catholic or worldwide true Israel of God. Imagine a man serving a congregation as overseer and shepherd when he has, himself, been a member of the flock for only a short period of time. It is unthinkable; and in order to keep neophytes out of the presbytery the Lord has placed a placard over the doorway to that service bearing the words, "**NO NOVICES ADMITTED.**"

Acts 13 and 14 record Paul's first missionary tour which required, from my best information, about three years before his return to Antioch to make a report on the success of his trip. It must have required much of this time to establish those churches on his forward journey for many of the brethren had to be converted from idol worship. And I think it quite significant that when he had finished his goings at Derbe he retraced his course—"To Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples" and ".... appointed for them elders in every church" (Acts 14:20-23).

Now these churches mentioned could not have been more than a matter of months old and yet Paul appointed elders in them and he was surely governed by the instructions he gave to Timothy and Titus which to my mind indicates that one recently converted cannot necessarily be considered a novice. The true meaning of novice, if I understand the word, is not necessarily one *JUST RECENTLY CONVERTED*, but one who is *INEXPERIENCED*, or in the *APPRENTICESHIP* of a trade or calling.

**WERE THE ELDERS OF ACTS 14:23 MIRACULOUSLY GIFTED?**

A church composed of converted Jews and Gentiles not older than one year had developed material sufficient to meet the requirement of elders. This argues strongly that such can be done today. No one can claim with assurance that the elders appointed here on this trip were inspired and that they were qualified so quickly by a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit. Such a position is not tenable.

Some have been discouraged when they understood the high standard of qualifications of elders and have refused to serve as elders. Such should not be discouraged, but should strive the harder to measure up to these qualifications.

L. LEO BOLES—*Eldership-Churches of Christ*, p. 23

So I think it is a necessary inference that among the members of these newly established churches there were men of former religious conviction, of learning, experience, executive ability, and moral stamina who had no need other than to be converted from a false religion to Christianity. At any rate I think you *must* agree that Paul, so quickly, found men in these young churches who possessed the qualities he named to Timothy and Titus to an appreciable degree at least. So let us not overdo the matter and make a bugaboo of the eldership to the point of frightening those qualified, for the work, away from their responsibility.

I think many have overworked the Scriptures on the points of the "novice," "husband of one wife" and "having children that believe."

A good Brother wrote me as follows:

I do not agree with you that the elder's qualifications should not be any greater than what is required of any and all Christians.

In that quotation you will find a key to much of our trouble with the *Elder Problem*.

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## ORDINATION OR APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS

### NUMBER ONE

FOR AS much as there has been, in some parts, from little to much discussion over the two nouns of the above caption I consider my task would be incomplete should I allow this controversial point to pass without giving the arguments and the meaning of the words proper attention. The argument, in substance, is as follows: "For emphasis we repeat a statement which we have made many times in the past; viz, man (men, the church) may *ORDAIN* qualified men in the presbytery, but it is a prerogative of God Almighty to appoint them (cf. Acts 14: 23)."—A. L. Deveny, in *The Ordained Elder*, March, 1946. Brother Deveny and I are very close to each other and our thoughts, for the most part, run parallel. But we differ on a few things very widely. And as he seems to champion the above position it is due him to have an audience with my readers. I hope, therefore, you will find the following communications interesting and helpful.

March 8, 1947

MR. A. L. DEVENY  
Austin Texas

*Dear Brother:*

In my former booklet on *The Eldership* I had a chapter on the "Appointment of Elders," in which I discussed the terms "appoint" and "ordain." I note that in your writing you very frequently argue that men, or the church, have the power to only "ordain" and that God only has the prerogative to "appoint" elders in His church. My next work on *The Eldership* now being prepared will necessarily have to do with their appointment. Now, that I want to err in no matter pertaining to the Lord and his work and church, and that I have not hitherto grasped the key to your above men-

tioned position in your paper or in your book, I am writing you at this time seeking a clear understanding of the basis of your reasoning. And whereas I think my readers will be entitled to know all that may be learned about this matter I submit to you the following proposition:

If you will write a brief article, yet clear and explicit, setting forth your reasoning and conclusion on this point wherein I, at present differ with you, I will print the article verbatim. Then after a thorough study of your arguments I will follow your article with comments concurring with you in your premises, reasoning and conclusion; or, if I still dissent I will examine them in the "Spirit of fairness and candor" and give my reasons for concluding that man in obedience to the Lord's command may do the ordaining or appointing of elders in the church of our Lord. I am willing for my readers to have the benefit of the arguments on either side and let them be, in part at least, responsible to God for their own individual conclusion. Inform me immediately as to what I may expect in response to this request. Very truly yours,

In hope of the unity which is in Christ.

HERBERT E. WINKLER

Under date of March 11, 1947 the following answer came to my home:

*Dear Brother Winkler:*

I have your very kind and magnanimous letter of March 8th in which you request that an article be prepared for inclusion in your forthcoming book on the Eldership, upon the particular subject of "Appointment of Elders in the Church." Another way of stating it may be "Ordination of Elders in the Church." In either event the crux of spiritual teaching upon the subject involving a differentiation of meaning of the two words "ordination" and "appointment" (provided there is a fundamental difference in the terms) is the thing most desired. If there is no fundamental difference deducible the attempt at writing such an article would come under the head of "Much Ado About Nothing." There is no desire in my heart to try to force opinion, as such, down the throats of my brethren. On the other hand since every real student of the word of God is forced to confess that man, at best, in his finiteness, has but penetrated a short distance beyond the periphery toward the comprehension of the mass of God's eternal Truth, I take courage and hereby give you assurance that with such truth of God as I can find that is related to the subject in hand as my guide I shall give my best thought to the preparation of the script requested.

With your attitude toward the work you have undertaken, I am sure that the Lord will abundantly bless both you and it to the common good of His children and to His glory.

Your brother in Christ,  
A. L. DEVENY

After I wrote him in answer to some personal questions he had asked I had the following note from Brother Deveny under date of March 21, 1947:

*Dear Brother Winkler:*

Received your good letter of the 14th in due course and enjoyed it very much. . . . Enclosed herewith you will please find an article which I am hoping will meet your requirement. Please let me hear from you at your early convenience as to whether in your opinion it furnishes the matter desired for your readers upon the particular subject of ordination.

With every good wish, I remain

Your brother in the Lord,  
A. L. DEVENY

Brother Deveny's article follows:

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

The church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is beyond comparison the greatest institution that has ever been set up among men. This is true for a number of reasons a few of which are as follows:

(1) *The church is of divine origin.* It was not conceived in the mind of any man or any set of men; but was conceived in the mind and in the heart of man's creator, the ever-living and ever-loving Heavenly Father. Hence, the church as an institution is great because of its origin (Matthew 16:18).

(2) *The church is the world's greatest institution because of its nature which is spiritual.* "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched . . . . but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake

on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12: 18-29).

(3) *The church is the world's greatest institution because of its position, which is intermediate between the world and the things of the world, and the final state of the redeemed.* "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth" (John 17:9-17).

(4) *The church is the world's greatest institution because of its composition.* It is composed of those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb; whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life through obedience to the commands of the Gospel of Christ. "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have

put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Colossians 3:9-11). In speaking of the holy city, John says: "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" (Revelation 21:27). ". . . And he said unto me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14).

(5) *The church is the world's greatest institution because of the price that was paid for it; viz, the precious blood of the Son of God.* No other institution was ever erected at so great cost. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

(6) *The church is the world's greatest institution because salvation from past sins may be had in no other.* "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). This signifies, of course, the church which he promised that he would build (cf. Matthew 16:18).

(7) *The church is the world's greatest institution because it encompasses the whole family of God upon the earth.* Every person who is saved from his past sins is a member of it. God has but one family in the earth and all of his children are brethren and are urged by the Spirit to dwell together in unity (John 17).

(8) *The church is the world's greatest institution because Jesus Christ is its head* (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23 and Colossians 1:18). (If Christ Jesus is the head of the church, and we are all agreed that he is, it behoves every separate group or

congregation to exercise care that it shall be guided in everything that it does by his word. Certainly nothing should ever be done or said within the body that would serve to detract attention from him; or rob him of the glory and honour rightfully due him).

(9) *The church is the world's greatest institution because of the exceeding great and precious promises that are vouchsafed unto its members.* (What are a few of these promises? The privilege and efficacy of prayer; the intercession of Christ in one's behalf; the groanings of the Holy Spirit for us; the forgiveness of sins; the love of Christ and of God, and the way of escape when we are tempted to do evil, etc.).

(10) *The church is the world's greatest institution because there are so many blessings enjoyed by its members that are not obtainable elsewhere.* (Among these blessings are: the peace of Christ; the grace and the goodness of God; the communion of the Holy Spirit; the fellowship of the saints; God's great care for his children; divine protection; growth in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord; divine guidance for the asking; the comfort of the Scriptures when we come to depart this life, and assurance of eternal salvation in the world to come).

(11) *The church is the world's greatest institution because of its mission.* Its mission is threefold; viz, the conversion of the unsaved to Christ; the eternal salvation of its members through the unerring guidance of Jesus Christ who is Shepherd and Bishop of redeemed souls, and the worship and adoration of God.

The church, then, is of divine origin. It is a spiritual entity in the world, intermediate between the world of sin and the eternal abode, composed of all the redeemed, and bought with the precious blood of the Son of God. Salvation may be had in no other institution and it follows that all of the saved are in it. Jesus Christ is the head of the church in which peculiar blessing and great and precious promises are enjoyed. Its mission is the evangelization of the world; the eternal salvation of its member-

ship, and to provide for the common worship and adoration of our eternal God and Father.

Having regard for the consideration above mentioned a new and fuller meaning should attach to Paul's statement wherein he says: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).

#### THE PRESBYTERY

It is manifestly a misnomer to refer to a group of Christians who have banded together for the purpose of doing the will of Christ, as a congregation within the meaning of New Testament teaching when they have neither a presbytery nor intention of ordaining one. In other words it is beyond any quibbling, to the contrary, the will of God that every congregation of saved persons shall have its presbytery. God's will in this matter does not rest upon implication, but rather upon very plain teaching both didactic and exemplary. We think no one would be so bold as to attempt to prove that any congregation mentioned in the New Testament Scriptures was without its presbytery any longer than pertinent conditions dictated.

A number of years ago we called attention of the church to the Scriptural distinction between the act of ordaining and the act of appointing men in the office of the presbytery and in the office of the deaconate. A few students in the church here and there are showing signs of understanding and have actually gone so far as to request ordination in the office for which they have been selected—in some instances. In such instances brethren are convinced that a statement made by either a ruling elder or a minister to the effect: "These brethren are hereby appointed elders of this congregation and you will please recognize them as such from this time forward" does not satisfy either the letter or the spirit of the divine will in the matter.

Until the time comes when the children of God through Christ are able to see in the church something more than a mere temporal, social, organization, and shall learn to do the Lord's

work in the Lord's way, we may be sure that he regards us as disobedient children. Certain men of unquestioned power and influence in the modern imperfect version of the church are known to us who wilfully place untenable interpretations upon certain passages of Scripture in support of their determination to usurp a divine prerogative. However, such violations of the will of the Lord should be expected upon the part of those who wrest the Scriptures unto their own destruction.

#### ORDINATION

We are thinking of ordination as applied to the setting up of men in the presbytery of the individual congregation of saints. You know, sometimes it seems that people who call themselves the people of God, the only true church, are willing to risk their eternal salvation upon a nominal obedience to the terms of the gospel of Christ, and upon rendering lip-service unto our Heavenly Father. Spirituality seems utterly foreign to a great many congregations as a whole. Far too many of our recognized leaders in the church are deficient in spirituality without which the spiritual nature cannot be developed in others.

To our mind one of the finest opportunities for the enhancement of spiritual growth and development of the member of a congregation is presented in connection with selection and ordination of Scripturally qualified men to serve the flock as its shepherds and overseers. Oftentimes too little emphasis is placed upon the fact that the whole procedure is undertaken in conformity with the expressed will of God. One would certainly be very presumptuous to think that God Almighty had overlooked anything bearing upon the presbytery of whom he expects so much (Hebrews 13:17).

Please note the following considerations: (1) the Lord has provided that every congregation shall have its presbytery; (2) every presbytery shall consist of a plurality of men; (3) men, to be qualified for service in the presbytery, must meet a certain test which is given to us in duplicate; viz, I Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-9; (4) these men of special qualification are to be

selected by unanimous assent of the membership of the congregation; (5) in carrying out the will of the Lord, it follows that some designated leader in the congregation shall with proper ceremony present those chosen unto the Lord—this is done through prayer and constitutes ordination; (6) the Lord's requirements being satisfied in every particular, He will do the appointing; (7) the Lord has named the duties and responsibilities of the presbyters (shepherds and overseers); (8) it is the Lord who would have the members of the flock “know them which labour among you and are over you in the Lord”; (9) the Lord will require a report of their stewardship of the presbyters in the Day of Judgment, and (10) when the Chief Shepherd shall appear He will reward faithful presbyters with the unfading crown of glory.

Need anything more be said in support of our thesis that qualified men can only be ordained by men; i.e., set up, set apart, for special service as presbyters, and that their final appointment is made only by Him who will hold them to account?

However, lest some may yet be somewhat skeptical we offer the following. The Apostle Paul, undoubtedly the greatest Christian of all time, was a very humble man; certainly he did not think of himself more highly than he ought to think, was never ready to leave a congregation of his establishment until it had been set in order. That always included the selection of men for and their ordination in the presbytery. While there is not one word of direct testimony in the Bible to the effect that Paul saw to ordaining certain men in the presbytery in the church of Ephesus, we doubt if there is a student in the whole world who would deny that he did so organize that church. It would certainly require a wild stretch of the imagination to think that Paul would have left the organization of that church to some other after he had laboured with them for more than three long years.

Let us examine a statement made by Paul in his address to the elders of Ephesus. “Take heed therefore unto yourselves,

and to all the flock, *over the which I appointed you overseers. . . .*" "Oh, no you don't," says one, "that is not the way the passage reads." Then, let's try again. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, *over the which I (in the Holy Ghost's stead) made (appointed) you overseers. . . .*" "No, no, no. No such language is found in the text." Very well, let us read it as it appears: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. . . ." (Acts 20:28). What is the logical conclusion? Is it not perfectly reasonable and logical to assume that the Apostle Paul humbled himself before the throne of God and offered these men who were selected by the church unto God for confirmation and appointment? If not, why not? Could language be made any plainer?

That the same thing is true of Paul's action recorded in Acts 14:23 admits of no doubt. Let us read: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." This, from the King James Version. Some more modern versions substitute the word appointed for ordained, but the two terms are clearly not synonymous. We know that it cannot be wrong to set up, set apart, men for service in the presbytery of the local congregation with a ceremony of prayer which constitutes ordination by the authority of Christ and in His name. To follow such course is safe. For any men unceremoniously and therefore without prayer to appoint one or more men as presbyters in the church is without Scriptural precedent and constitutes an affront to Him who is head over all things to the church.

March 20, 1947

(Signed)

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## ORDINATION OR APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS

## NUMBER Two

BROTHER DEVENY has a good article in which in eleven paragraphs he gives his reasons for stating the church of our Lord "Is beyond comparison the greatest institution that has ever been set up among men." I would, all of God's children could thus grasp the intrinsic worth of this heaven born kingdom for the salvation of the souls of men. He, also, stresses the Scriptural requirements for church organization and pronounces against any who dare to argue that the churches in New Testament times delayed, wilfully, the ordination of the presbytery.

However, finally, I was somewhat disappointed in the arguments on the words *Ordain* and *Appoint*. I wish to argue the question as follows and desire a careful reading: The apostles were the ambassadors of God clothed with authority to bind and loose on earth with the assurance the same should be bound and loosed in heaven. This they did, obviously, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Holy Spirit has given to the church, for all time to come, through the apostles who wrote God's Will what we must do. For instance, in II Thessalonians 3:6 we are commanded, in the name of Christ, to withdraw from the disorderly. We may be assured that when we have exhausted all available means of bringing the erring to repentance and failed, and thus proceed to withdraw from the subject in hand, that God ratifies that act in heaven by withdrawing his grace and approval from him also. In other words, God binds in heaven the thing that is bound on earth by the apostles through us.

Is it argued this is not what Christ had in mind while talking

to Peter? But who will argue this is not included and that the scope of Christ's statements to Peter were not far reaching enough to embrace my position? Now if this is true, and I firmly believe it is, and granting that the two words *Ordain* and *Appoint* have different meanings it occurs to me that if we ordain elders that God would ratify by finally ordaining and not by appointing and vice versa.

So if my position is correct and we ordain elders and God approves by appointing them from his throne then it follows that ordain and appoint are synonyms; particularly in this case, which I believe to be correct from the following study of the two words. I had expected Brother Deveny to go into a study of the two words involved and show their origin and derivities and make it clear that the words have different meanings when used by man and his Maker. But in this I was wrong. I wrote for his dissertation on the two words solely for information for I wanted the advantage of all obtainable information so as not to err in this responsible task to which I have set my hand and heart.

If the two words were for the two realms: ordain for the human and appoint for the divine it was due me and my readers thus to be informed. The thought that man may ordain elders in the congregations but that it is a prerogative of God alone to appoint them I deem to be without foundation. Yet I believe strongly with Brother Deveny that our ordination or appointment of elders must have God's final confirmation. This it MUST have or we have erred and failed to meet the Scriptural requirements.

Question, If we are to ordain elders in the churches and God appoints them I wonder if our failure to ordain them hinders God from appointing them? I think it is true that God's confirmation depends upon our action, for, otherwise how would we know whom he had appointed? This is one thought that leads me to believe that man is as much in the appointment as God himself. He commands and specifies the character of the men to be appointed and commends our action when we thus comply.

Note carefully the following:

#### GUIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come” (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit was guiding the apostle Paul into part of all truth when he wrote the qualification for the elder—the official body of the church on earth—and when a congregation of the Lord’s people follows the Holy Spirit’s instructions as given through the pen of Paul and ordain or appoint the class of men designated, then those men are made elders or overseers by the Holy Spirit. And what is bound on earth by following the guide is also bound in heaven and thus the church in following the leading of the Master in ordaining or appointing elders is doing it in co-operation with the Lord, and I see but little or no need of contending over *man made* and *Holy Spirit made* elders as long as we do what Paul commanded, for it is certain that the Holy Spirit can neither ordain nor appoint (if there is any difference in the two words which I fail to see) elders or overseers in any congregation on earth without the action of man in compliance with the Spirit’s instruction.

Neither am I prepared to accept the teaching that the elders at Ephesus were made by the Holy Spirit without the co-operation of human agency. “In which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops” (Acts 20:28). And if I may be as frank as some who oppose my position, may I add here that the argument that man ordains elders but God only holds the prerogative to appoint them is just so much buncombe and hair splitting over the meaning of words and making a distinction where there is no difference. This tends only “To the subverting of the hearers” (II Timothy 2:14). A case in point is found in I Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” Now, the Holy Spirit never does the baptizing, that is left for man, but when we baptize proper subjects according to the direction of

the Holy Spirit they are properly said to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. As in John 4:2 Jesus, in person, baptized no one, yet in verse 1 he baptized more disciples than John. And may we not also conclude that when the church withdraws from the disorderly according to the command of II Thessalonians 3:6 that he stands withdrawn from in heaven?

Oh, I appreciate the fact that the eldership or presbytery is a system of government for the church on earth that originated in the mind of God and that it is his own divinely appointed or ordained arrangement, but that the Lord selects certain individuals for elders I deny. The Lord only specified the type of character and has left it in the hands of men to appoint men of their own selection, whose lives measure up to the requirements of the Lord, to act in that capacity in which the Lord appointed for them to serve.

After all, Brother A. L. Deveny, who differs widely from me on ordain and appoint, in his book *The Church and Its Elders* on page 227, has expressed exactly that for which I have been contending. I quote: "The spirit of the teachings of the Scriptures lead us to understand that the apostles under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit must have appointed the elderhood in much the same way as the deacons were appointed" (Acts 6:3). I do not doubt that the apostles did appoint elders "under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit," and in that respect they were made overseers by the Holy Spirit. And in our time when we follow the word we appoint elders under the indirect guidance of the Holy Spirit and still they are made overseers by the Holy Spirit. But why prolong the study of the words ordain and appoint? It is because this scribe deems the position that we can only ordain elders and that God only has the power to appoint them is erroneous and in order to come to the very best understanding and appreciation of any problem or teaching all error regarding it must first be overcome. And I have not grasped the pen only to write a fanciful treatise on this supremely important subject and in most respects very poorly considered by the

majority of our preaching brethren from whom we have the right to expect better things.

### THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES ELDERS

The Holy Spirit makes elders in much the same way he makes sons of God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). But how are we led by the Spirit? He is leading us when we do what he commands of us. Also, "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are sons of God" (ver. 16). But how does the Holy Spirit bear this witness with us? Is it not through our doing what he commands? So our spirits are doing as much of the witnessing as is the Holy Spirit. Note that the record says the Spirit bears witness *WITH*, not *TO* our spirit. So when we either ordain or appoint elders in keeping with the Holy Spirit's instruction they are Holy Spirit made elders.

Again I am reminded that Brother Deveny wrote in his book, *The Church and Its Elders* on pp. 226 and 227 the exact thing for which I contend, I quote:

"We have already pointed out that evidences indicate the appointment of three qualified men to serve the Jerusalem Church as shepherds and overseers within a comparatively short time after the setting up of the new Spiritual Kingdom. (The word 'appointment' is used advisedly. The spirit of the teachings of the Scriptures lead us to understand that the apostles under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit must have appointed the elderhood in much the same way as the deacons were appointed. Cf. Acts 6:3)."

Now the thing I cannot see is this: That the apostles, by the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit by doing the will of the Holy Spirit appointed elders; but we, by the indirect guidance of the Holy Spirit through his direction in the New Testament, by doing the will of the Holy Spirit do not, or cannot, appoint elders; but only ordain them. I still claim it is making a distinction where no difference is in evidence.

### Is THIS HIS POINT?

It was not made clear; but I have surmised the following to be the line of thought in the mind of Brother Deveny: That the

original plan or order of the Lord is equal to the Lord appointing, that certain arrangements must be complied with in his church, and that the church or men ordain certain men to do the work God appointed to be done. In other words the one who originates a plan is the *APPOINTER* and he who carries the plan into execution is the *ORDAINER*. If this is what Brother Deveny had in mind I wish arguments had been produced in support of it. Do the words carry any such distinction? I trow not. Nor, have I found any statements in the New Testament which indicate such to my mind. That all elders possessing the Scriptural qualifications and acting according to the teachings of the New Testament are selected, ordained, and appointed by the Holy Spirit has ever been my belief. And the whole matter is accomplished by our co-ordination with the Holy Spirit.

I heartily accept Brother Deveny's closing remarks: "*For any man unceremoniously and therefore without prayer* (emphasis mine) to appoint one or more men as presbyters in the church is without Scriptural precedent and constitutes an affront to Him who is head over all things to the church."

It is obvious that in any act of worship or Scriptural service as it pertains to the conduct of the assembly of the saints, the Lord's blessings must be invoked in prayer and thanksgiving.

I hope Brother Deveny will forgive me for expressing disappointment that the only thing in his article that approached an argument was the case of Paul with the Ephesian Elders at Miletus, and the whole argument breaks under its own weight when viewed in the light of the counter arguments presented in the preceding pages of this chapter. From what logical reasoning may we conclude that men may only ordain elders and that God alone can appoint them?

## ORDINATION OR APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS

## NUMBER THREE

## A STUDY OF THE WORDS

ALL AUTHORITIES within my knowledge have the two words very closely tied together. Webster's *International Unabridged Dictionary* of the G.&C. Merriam Series renders them as follows: "Ordain; To establish by appointment, decree, or law; to constitute; decree; appoint; institute; enact"; "Appoint; To ordain; to determine to arrange; to exercise an act or power of appointment."

In James Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* there is a dictionary of the Hebrew terms of the Old Testament and a Greek Dictionary of the terms given in the New Testament from which I take the following, using the King James Version: Mark 3:14 "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." The Greek term here for *ordain* is number 4160 and is *Paieo*, (pay-eh'-o) and carries the idea "To make or do; appoint; band together; observe; ordain; perform; provide; etc." "And when they had ordained them elders in every church" (Acts 14:23). This Greek term for *ordain* is number 5500 and is *Cheirotaneo*, (khi-rot-on-eh'-o) "(to stretch); to be a hand reacher or voter (by raising the hand) i.e., (gen.) to select or appoint—choose; ordain."

"And so ordain I in all churches" (I Corinthians 7:17). The term here is number 1299 and is: *Diatasso* (dee-at-as'-so), and is connected with No. 1223 which "In composition it retains the same general import," and also No. 5021 *Tasso* (tas'-so): "To arrange in an orderly manner, i.e., assign or dispose (to a certain

position or lot): addict; appoint; determine; ordain; set.” Now No. 1299 is defined thus: “To arrange thoroughly, i.e., (spec) institute, prescribe, etc., appoint, command, give, (set in) order, ordain.” And this No. 1299 is used in I Corinthians 9:14 which says, “The Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” So the same Greek word is used to show that both Paul and the Lord ordain things and that this term means either **ORDAIN** or **APPOINT**. This is the term used in Acts 7:44 of God “as he appointed who spake unto Moses.” And of Paul in Acts 20:13, “For so had he appointed.”

“And ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.” Now the word used by Paul for appointed here is the same 1299 as above and shows that Paul also appointed things. So according to the King James Translation to which men hold to show that man ordains and that God only appoints we have their argument refuted for in I Corinthians 7:17 Paul ordained and in 9:14 the Lord ordained, and in Titus 1:5 Paul appoints and in Acts 7:44 the Lord appoints and the very same Greek word No. 1299 is used in the four passages. Now why complain that the Revised Version, as a modern version, substitutes the word appoint for ordain when the King James Version takes the same Greek word and makes it read both ordain and appoint of both God and man? I would not know how to answer that were I on that side.

But lets go back to Titus 1:5, “And ordain elders in every city.” The Greek term here is number 2525 and is *Kathhistemi* (kath-is'-tay-mee) and is rendered by James Strong as “To place down (permanently), i.e., (fig.) to designate, constitute, convoy; appoint, be, conduct, make, Ordain, set.” And what’s more, this is the same word that Paul used in Hebrews 5:1 and 8:3 to show that the Lord ordained high priests for man and to offer gifts. But these are all rendered appoint and appointed in the R.V. Now if God appoints I suppose the Revised rendering appointed is correct; but the same word is used with reference to something Titus must do and his act must coincide with the act of the

Lord for they are indicated by the same word and if one appoints by what logic do we deny that the other also appoints?

So in Mark 3:14 Jesus did the ordaining (appointing); in Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5 the disciples of Jesus did the ordaining (appointing); in I Corinthians 7:17 Paul did the ordaining and in I Corinthians 9:14 the Lord did the ordaining and the same word is used in the original, in all these cases, to show that both God and man ordain (appoint). In Hebrews 5:1 and 8:3 God did the ordaining (appointing). So, God ordains (appoints) men, God's Son ordains (appoints) men and members of God's Church ordain (appoint) men. And I am ready to accept this: that man's right to ordain or appoint any thing or any body in the work of the Lord, is limited by the requirements of the New Testament.

### ORDAIN—APPOINT

Mark 3:14

#### KING JAMES VERSION

And he **ORDAINED** twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.

Acts 14:23

And when they had **ORDAINED** them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Titus 1:5

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and **ORDAIN** elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.

Heb. 5:1

For every high priest taken from among men is **ORDAINED** for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.

#### REVISED VERSION

And he **APPOINTED** twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.

And when they had **APPOINTED** for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and **APPOINT** elders in every city, as I gave thee charge.

For every high priest, being taken from among men, is **APPOINTED** for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.

Heb. 8:3

For every high priest is **ORDAINED** to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

For every high priest is **APPOINTED** to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this high priest also have somewhat to offer.

“In all the above passages the Revision of 1881-1885 reads the same as the American Standard Version. In the King James translation of the New Testament the word ‘ordain’ (‘ordained’) is found twenty-one times; in the Revised Version the word is found only eight times, showing a marked preference for the word ‘appoint’ (‘appointed’). The word ‘ordination’ is not found in either translation: neither ‘ordination service,’ ‘ordination of elders,’ ‘ordination programs’ nor similar terms.”

I make this quotation just as a point of interest.

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### JUST TO HAVE A FRIEND STAND BY

*When trouble comes your soul to try,  
 You love the friend who just stands by,  
 Perhaps there's nothing he can do;  
 The task is strictly up to you,  
 For there are troubles all your own,  
 And paths the soul must tread alone—  
 Times when love can't smooth the road,  
 Nor friendship lift the heavy load.  
 But just to feel you have a friend,  
 Who will stand by unto the end,  
 Whose sympathy through all endures,  
 Whose warm handclasp is always yours,  
 Although there's nothing he can do,  
 It helps somehow to pull you through.  
 And so with fervent heart we cry:  
 “God bless the friend who just stands by.”*

—J. M. McCaleb

## ORDINATION OR APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS

## NUMBER FOUR

Now, having, in the preceding chapters on this subject dealt with what I term erroneous teaching on the terms *ORDAIN* and *APPOINT* and cleared the way for a brief word on the subject I give verbatim the chapter on *APPOINTMENT* as it appeared in my former publication of some dozen years ago:

Now as to the appointment of elders there is not much to write, and I wish to shun the path of speculation which so many travel when they fail to find picking (to their liking) in the Lord's pasture.

That there is a certain way elders were appointed in New Testament times we find not. Some claim the term "ordain" is to be retained rather than the term "appoint" in that, it carries with it a certain meaning of ordination including "fasting and prayer and the laying on of the hands."

Let's define the two terms with still a third: Ordain: "To appoint to a duty—office, or the like"—Webster. Appoint: "To fix by a decree, order, command, resolve, decision, or mutual agreement; to constitute; to ordain, etc."—Webster. Elective: "Appointed, bestowed, or passing, by election"—Webster.

So the president of the United States, who is said to be elected, is both appointed and ordained by the voters of the Union. I merely mention these things to show that neither of the terms carry a certain form of ordaining or appointing as an innate meaning. In other words, these terms like "go" are generic. The Lord said "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." But the term does not specify how we are to go. I can walk, go by ox-

cart, auto, submarine, or airplane as will prove the most efficient to me, and I shall have obeyed the command.

So, "appoint" and "ordain" do not show or even intimate how the thing is to be done. I know what Timothy and Titus did when they appointed elders; but I do not know how they did it. I do not know whether they appointed them without considering the wishes of the church in the appointing or whether the whole church participated in the appointment by casting votes of approval, or by standing in approval, or otherwise; nor has that a thing to do with the way I appoint them so long as I do "all things . . . decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40).

Some claim the appointment of the seven in Acts 6:1-6 "Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them," teaches that the imposition of hands is a part of, and necessary, to, the appointment. But we see that these men had spiritual gifts which was not necessary to the work of serving tables for which they were appointed. These gifts were evidently imparted through the laying on of their hands. And if this gift was not necessary to their serving tables, then it was not necessary to the appointment to that work; and if it was not necessary to that work, it follows that the laying on of the apostles' hands, through which the gift was imparted, was not a part of the appointment to serve tables.

Why then did the apostles lay their hands upon these men? Answer, we must not lose sight of the fact that the early Christians; and whole churches in that day had spiritual gifts by the laying on of the apostles' hands (See Romans 1:11; I Corinthians 1:7; 14:23-33). "But whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away" (I Corinthians 13:8). The laying on of hands was to impart spiritual gifts and if the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 6:6) was a part of, and necessary to, the appointment of these men, then what gifts did Timothy and Titus impart to the elders they appointed?

The laying on of hands was to impart spiritual gifts. And if

laying on of hands is necessary to, and a part of, the appointment of elders, then Timothy and Titus laid their hands upon the elders they appointed and imparted to them some spiritual gifts. Timothy received a gift by the laying on of Paul's hands; but who claims that Paul imparted a power to him by which he could impart a gift to whomsoever his hands might be laid upon?

1. Imposition of hands was to impart spiritual gifts.
2. But Timothy and Titus had not power to impart spiritual gifts.
3. Therefore, Timothy and Titus did not lay hands on the elders whom they appointed.

It is evident, therefore, that Timothy and Titus did not possess the power to impart spiritual gifts by the imposition of hands in connection with the appointment of elders, and as they were ordered to ordain or appoint elders, this is proof that imposing the hands is not a part of the appointment.

Some, not being able to find the way of appointing elders in the Bible have gone to the absurd extreme that we cannot now appoint them; but that they grow into the eldership. I reply that an appointment of some kind is absolutely necessary; for if the command to have elders applies to our day then the command to appoint them applies also. Howsoever well a man is qualified to do the work of an elder, or a civil officer, he must receive the right to so act and this right and recognition is given by appointment of some kind. These men are to develop the qualification by a growth, through walking in good works and godliness, but that does not make them elders. There are many men who possess the qualification for elders who are not elders.

If being qualified to do a given work placed the man in the position without an appointment, then every man in the United States so qualified would be the President of the Union.

As in Acts 6:1-6 no man can successfully do the work, needed to be done, without being appointed to do that work and is so recognized, by all, that he is the man to fill that place. One has asked: "Is a man set in place without receiving the powers of

the place?" Power has both meanings, ability and right. The power or ability to do a work is in the qualification the man possesses to carry on a given work; but the appointment grants unto him the power or right to do the work, and is a means of recognition and places him in a position to do the work for which he is qualified.

We are commanded to baptizo-dip people, that is, baptize them. We all lower the candidate into the water face upward; but if I should baptize one face downward, who could prove that I had not obeyed the Lord? The command to baptize does not tell how it is done. So any decent way would be acceptable. I could take the candidate up in my arms and lower the whole body into the water at once and that would be baptism. (And so I have.)

So, also, the command to appoint can be obeyed many ways. I do not claim that I appoint elders just after the same manner that Timothy and Titus did, and as they were only young preachers like myself I think I can say, without any degree of egotism that my way of appointing elders is as good as was theirs.

When a brother falls on some certain plan and claims that it is the only way to appoint elders and that it was done that way in New Testament times, I will oppose him in his claims. But when a brother comes to me with some certain plan and says, "Brother, I like this plan better than any other and I want to appoint them this way," and makes no claims for that way to the exclusion of all other ways, why, then I will say, "go on my brother, your way is as good as mine and forty others if it is done 'decently and in order.'"

So one way of appointing elders may be as good as forty, and forty as good as one.

The thing for churches to do now, is to appoint elders, who are blameless, and stop worrying and arguing about the "how" when God cared so little about that as not to tell man nor give him an example to follow.

## SUGGESTIVE

Brother A. L. Deveny suggests a procedure that seems to be in order. I quote:

"After the one in charge of the service has presented a Scriptural lesson comporting with the occasion and has concluded his remarks by offering a final word to the men selected," he continues:

And, now, upon the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the exalted head over all things to the church, and in the august presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of the celestial multitude and of this waiting earth-bound congregation of saints, we shall proceed with the ordination service. You will please bow your heads.

Our dear Father, the flock worshiping at this place has prayerfully selected these brethren who, in our finite judgment, appear to meet thy righteous requirements for service in the congregation as shepherds and overseers, and we humbly submit them unto Thee for Thine approval. We pray, dear Lord, that Thy will may be accomplished in us in all that we do.

Do Thou bless these men in their capacity as leaders of Thy flock here. May the example that they set before us in Christ-likeness be ever worthy of our emulation. Grant unto them, Father, a large measure of Thy Holy Spirit that they may assume the duties and obligations which Thou hast imposed willingly and of a ready mind. May they at all times receive their direction in the performance of their functions from Thine enlightening commandments, and may they exercise wisdom and righteous judgment and charity in the execution of the same. Help them as the stewards of the souls which compose this congregation and of later accessions to it that they may so shield, encourage, and protect them that none may become lost; and that all may be led safely into the Heavenly Fold where we shall find rest.

Bless us who constitute the flock, Holy Father, that we may not be unruly, but that we may always be ready and willing to obey the regulations of our elders as they shall strive to guide and direct according to the unerring counsel of Thy Holy precepts. Help us to be obedient unto them, as unto those who shall be required to give account before Thy judgment bar, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, that we may be profited thereby. And above all do Thou help us that we shall know them which labour among us and are over us in the Lord, and that we may esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.

Forgive us, our Father, of all unforgiven sins.

We offer these brethren to Thee for Thine approval and appointment as our elders; these humble petitions, and all that we have this day done

in the all-prevailing name of Him who died for us—Thine only begotten Son. Amen and Amen.

I think the words of Brother A. Campbell will easily apply to the above:

Whether this may include all the solemnities of such an occasion may, perhaps, be questioned by some; but that it does not transcend all that is taught and implied in the ancient order of ordination, cannot, we think, be doubted by anyone intelligent in the oracles of God."

A closing note from Brother Deveny:

Think you that a congregation of saved people—people who have accepted and obeyed the gospel of salvation as perfected by Jesus Christ and as proclaimed possibly for the first time in more than 1400 years by Brother Campbell and others early in the nineteenth century—with an elderhood of Scripturally qualified men, ordained in harmony with the above rite, would be any worse off before Heaven's throne than a group that is lorded over by imposters? Of course not. Wouldn't you like to be a member of a congregation that is organized according to the Lord's own design? Then let us work and pray and plan to that greatly-to-be-desired end.

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### I'D RATHER

*I would rather be a "has been"  
Who has fought for noble cause,  
Although I had lost the battle—  
Than to be a "never was."*

*I would rather toil and labor  
For a principal of right,  
Than to ride to easy riches  
Won by mailed fist of might.*

*I would rather have a record  
Of an honest, humble name  
Than to win success and honor  
That has caused distress or shame.*

—Selected

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AN IMPORTANT EXPLANATION

UPON the completion of the four preceding chapters on "Ordination or Appointment of Elders," I sent copies to Brother Deveny so he would know my reaction to his article and position, which I felt was in all fairness due him.

His most pronounced reaction as voiced in a letter to me is that he got the impression that I hold to the idea that God is obligated to indorse our action in things pertaining to the church or that when we ordain an elder, God is under obligation to approve by appointing that same man an elder in His church. An excerpt from his letter follows:

Is the analogy with the following real, or imaginary? A man is in possession of the qualifications of an elder. He has a desire to serve the congregation of which he is a member as one of its elders; but for one or another reason the leaders of the congregation have not seen fit to take steps toward selecting him for that service. As long as the congregation does not designate him as one of those in authority over them, it would be folly upon our part to think that God Almighty could possibly hold him to account in the Day of Judgment as an elder. We may be sure that he would not be judged as an elder of that group. There is not one passage of Scripture which can be cited which even hints at such preposterous notion. Let us assume, however, that the elders one day decide that this brother has proven himself and is worthy of being considered for the office of elder, and set about after the Scriptural manner to select and ordain him in the office. In so far as men are concerned, it may seem that everything in connection with the transaction has been performed in perfect harmony with the will of God. Are we to understand that because we, in our finiteness, are unable to discover any flaw in what has been done by the church, that there is, therefore, no flaw and that what has been bound upon the congregation (upon earth) binds God to accept it? Our answer is in the negative. To argue otherwise is sheer presumption. The church in this case has simply "set up, set aside, set apart" this man for the work of an elder. We will add that he has been ordained with due solemnity and earnest prayer. By this method (if

you insist upon using the term "appoint" in the connection) to all intents and purposes the church has appointed him an elder. Just suppose, now, that the Lord sees a flaw in the heart of the man thus ordained. The condition of his heart will not alter the fact that he is one of the elders of the flock on time's side of eternity; but if his motives were base and if he were dishonest and hypocritical before the Lord, think you that the Lord would recognize him as an elder of his flock?

My answer is yes. And that the Lord would hold him responsible for accepting the office and also to a strict account for the souls of those over whom he accepted the appointment.

Therefore, he would not be appointed of the Lord to the office. Of course, this could not become known to the flock until the Day of Judgment when his sorry plight would be revealed. Is there any fault with this reasoning?

If I appear obstinate, may the Lord forgive me, but I think what I have written may stand; but if the thought was couched in words or phrases such as to admit of such an interpretation as expressed I wish to disabuse the minds of all readers. My position is: God is under no obligation to man other than that which he has assumed of his own will. If Brother A does not measure up to the Scriptural requirement of an elder and yet the congregation judges him as being so qualified and proceeds to appoint him an elder over the flock I do not contend that the action obligates God to so accept and confirm the appointment.

But in as much as we have no way of knowing for sure that God has accepted or rejected the action of the congregation and approved or disapproved the appointment of Brother A and in this case God seeing that the congregation is holding Brother A as one of its elders I believe God will accept and approve the appointment to the extent that He will hold Brother A responsible for not righting himself and will require at his hands the souls of the members who were looking to him for guidance and spiritual growth. However, if Brother A had not acquiesced and accepted the appointment; but had stated he was not qualified and did not wish to assume the obligations of a work for which he was not prepared there would be an altogether different story to tell. Are not all my arguments and position well based?

Oh, Brother, the eldership in the church of our Lord is fraught with such great responsibilities and consequences in watching for the souls of the flock as those who must give account to God at that great day; those chosen and appointed to that office should consider well their fitness for such a task.

If one is not qualified for the functions of such a work he should forthwith refuse the appointment or else acquire the qualification and willingly accept the place and discharge the duties incurred.

Now as stated above that God is under no obligation to us more than as He has committed Himself; yet in as much as we do not know the heart condition of one who is appointed to the eldership in His Church and therefore have absolutely no way of knowing whether God approves or disapproves the appointment I am forced to the persuasion that God will tolerate the appointment and hold the appointee to a strict account as an elder of the flock even though He does not approve the appointment.

One lesson we gather from the Old Testament history of God's people is that He told them what was just and right but let them have what they wanted. And when they chose a wicked man to be their king God dealt with him as their king and judged him according to his works while the people suffered as a result of their own improper conduct and choice. So I believe that when the churches now appoint the unqualified to be elders in His Church that He accepts the appointment even though He does not approve the character of the appointee. So I would say that to all intents and purposes every appointee is an elder in the church not only as regarded by man but also of God. But, Brother, do not think that God will hold him guiltless who accepts such an appointment and does not try to measure up to the qualification nor discharge the duties and responsibilities accompanying the office.

May the churches all become spiritual and drink deeply of the grace of God to the end that they will seriously consider the need of a really Spiritual Eldership and bend every energy in establishing such in all the churches of Christ everywhere.

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## ELDERS—THEIR DUTY TO THE CHURCH

**T**HREE are all kinds of theories advanced in order to arrive at a very prevalent conclusion, that we are not to have elders in the church today. One querist has asked the following regarding the present-day elder: "What can he say which the Bible does not say?" and thinks he has scored a point against having elders now. In answering this, I will ask, what can the civil officer say, which the law does not say? He receives no authority to speak where the law does not speak. Is that a point against having officers of the law now?

The elder in God's Church was never meant for a law-giver or an authority, in the absence of revealed law from God. The eldership is an executive, not a legislative body; for "One only is the law-giver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy" (James 4:12). Elders are to rule the church, according to the will of God. This ruling consists of enforcing the law of God. Should the elders bind things inconsistent with the New Testament upon the church, the members are under no obligation to obey them.

It is the duty of the elders to look after the vital interests of all, and in matters of mere business, where no principle of faith is involved, they should seek harmony and the good will of all the church, yet in these business affairs they should (do) have the power to decide matters.

If elders wish to consider the magnitude of their responsibility, it is expressed by Paul in Hebrews 13:17, as follows: "For they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief." Here we see that the elder is largely responsible for the spiritual status of the

members and will be held accountable to God if the church is not edified and built up in the most holy faith. Would that all elders were ever conscious of the fearful responsibility that attaches to their position in God's sight.

Brother David Lipscomb wrote as follows regarding the elders and their duty to the church:

The man who sympathizes with the weak and the tempted, who in a spirit of meekness is found trying to save those who have been overtaken in faults, considering that he is liable to be tempted himself, is the one that seeks the work, not the position of honor, and he is fitted for an elder. . . . The work of the elders is to encourage and develop and strengthen all the members of the church in all lines of Christian work. . . . The body of Christ should act as a unit; the elders are but the head of the body. (head used advisedly, author) The elders should not act independently of others of the church, nor the church of the elders. They are one, and must act as a unit. The elders should seek to encourage and develop the talent of every one in the church, and should encourage and advise all in every work as each has a taste or inclination to do. This does not mean that the member is to do nothing until he first consults the elders. What he has a talent and inclination to do is what the Lord calls him to do.

“The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the suffering of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away” (I Peter 5:1-4). Peter here admonishes the elders to feed the flock. Surely the word of the Lord must be fed to the flock if they are to “eat that which is good and let their souls delight themselves in fatness” (Isaiah 55:2). Jeremiah told Israel that God would give them shepherds who would feed them with “knowledge and understanding” (Jeremiah 3:15). Are elders now feeding themselves instead of the flock? And are they lords (bosses) over the heritage of Christ, ruling with a high ecclesiastico-secular hand, quarreling with their flocks rather than

contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints? They should be heavenly moulds, into which the spirits and conduct of their flock may be cast.

A friend of mine has aptly stated: "While I was growing up, we boys, took elders and made popguns of them; but now the churches are taking popguns and making elders of them." Brethren, this is only too true.

Paul in I Thessalonians 5:14, 15 exhorts the elders to "admonish the disorderly," and bring them into an orderly walk before the Lord and the world. He also enjoins encouragement to the fainthearted; support for the weak and "longsuffering toward all" and to maintain brotherly love in the church by seeing "that none render unto any one evil for evil."

He is to take the lead in all that pertains to the spiritual development of the body of Christ. He must see that the teaching of the body is in harmony with that of the Holy Spirit. He must see that the mouths of gainsayers are stopped. He should not permit false teachers in the congregation to go unrebuked, nor unreproved. "Holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers. For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:9-11).

Many a time, have I heard leaders of churches say: "Well, if I speak to him about his peculiar teaching, he will get angry with me and might cause trouble in the church. If I will leave him alone, maybe no one will pay attention to him and the effect of his teaching will die of itself. You know Jesus said, 'blessed is the peacemaker.'" Brethren, is it true that our leaders do not know the meaning of "Blessed are the peacemakers," that such an unjust and unhealthful construction, or meaning, is attached to the words of Christ? "And their word will eat as doth a gangrene; of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; men who con-

cerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some" (II Timothy 2:17, 18). If these false teachers are left alone, their words will prove destructive to many and maybe to the whole church. You had as well leave a sore alone on your body, and say: "If I will leave it alone it will die of itself." What wise man among us would not notice and doctor minor infections, in order to prevent greater trouble, which might result in death? Many congregations have dwindled away for want of a strong, vigorous, and consecrated eldership, and have become the prey of false teachers and doctrines. (See Romans 16:17; I Timothy 6:3-5; II Timothy 4:1-3; Titus 3:10, 11; II Peter 2:3; I John 4:1). These Scriptures teach the danger of leaving false teachers alone. If the elders do not save the flock from these ravening wolves in sheep's clothing, and ungodly beasts of prey, then who is to do it? Seeing that our preachers are traveling abroad, over the country preaching and are not with the church, all the while, as the elders are. The conclusion that God's order is that the elders "take care of the church of God" instead of having the preachers to do it is inevitable.

Paul thus addresses the church at Philippi: "To all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons." Bishop, overseer, elder, pastor, shepherd, and presbyter are all titles designating the same class of persons which we find in each congregation.

These bishops, overseers as their title implies, have the oversight of the church, and are to "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4).

They are to teach (I Timothy 3:2). They are to rule (Hebrews 13:17). And they are "worthy of double honor" who "rule well" (I Timothy 5:17).

They rule in example of life, taking care of the flock, and teaching under "the chief Shepherd," the Lord Jesus (I Peter 5:3, 4).

Difference between elders' and ordinary Christian duties:

- a. He takes the oversight; they are overseen by him.
- b. He feeds and tends the flock; they are fed and tended by him.
- c. He teaches and exhorts; they are to be taught and exhorted by him.
- d. He rules and takes care of the church; they are to be ruled and taken care of by him.
- e. He is to be an example; they are to take him for an example. He should be "an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12).

"O God! prepare the reader to give up his accounts with joy in that day! Amen."—ADAM CLARKE

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#### TO EACH HIS OWN PLACE

"While we are all members of the same great family, yet we are individuals, and as such have our respective inclinations. . . . If I cannot lead as a captain, let me follow as a private. If I cannot work as a shepherd, let me follow as a sheep. Thus each becomes a helper and a companion to all the rest. Each fits the place to which God has adapted him."—J. D. TANT. From the *Gospel Guardian*, February 16, 1950.

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## ELDERS—THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH TO THEM

**H**AVING NOTICED in the last article the duty of the elders to the church, I wish now to turn the picture around and view it from a different angle, by considering the duty of the members to the elders. That they owe certain consideration and duty to the elders is obvious.

Even in civil affairs the citizen owes certain duties to the officer. This may be seen from the following Scriptures: "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (I Peter 2:17). "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity" (I Timothy 2:1, 2). The effect is largely psychological, for while we are in an attitude of praying for the rulers we will be careful not to violate their laws, and will esteem them as men in authority, the result of which will be as Paul states, "that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity."

So, in order to keep the church in peace and harmony and obedience to the ruling of the elders, Paul admonishes the brethren at Thessalonica: "But we beseech you brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake" (I Thessalonians 5:12, 13). So long as the churches ordain elders, who are blameless, that rule their secular affairs and the house of God according to his will, the church is duty bound "to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake"; and this they will gladly do toward those God-fearing men who rule over them in love.

If they will have peace, harmony, concord, agreement, and unity in the congregations the members must regard the elders and “esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work’s sake” and “be at peace among yourselves.” With this status of affairs, the work is bound to move on to certain victory in Jesus’ name.

### MUST OBEY THEM

“Obey them that have the rule over you and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account: that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17). Here Paul commands the church to obey the elders, and to know that they are being held, largely, responsible, for their souls.

Brethren, the elders must give account to God for your souls, and if your conduct is improper, they must make their report before the great tribunal with grief; but the report must be made. If holy and pure, they will give it with joy. It is a fearful thought that many elders, who have loved their flocks as their own souls, shall be obliged to accuse them before God for having rejected or neglected his word as given by them.

But I have been told by objectors to present-day elders that no one has the rule over them and that they do not propose to obey any man in religion. The same book tells us to obey the civil authorities, and that they who resist the powers resist the ordinance of God, and they that do this shall receive judgment (Romans 13:1, 2); it also tells us to obey the elders who have the rule over us (Hebrews 13:17). What if we obey the one and reject the other? (James 2:11). We are to do both; but it is much easier to obey the elder who brings to us the word of God in love, admonishing us to turn from our evil way; than to obey the civil officer, who comes in a gruff, inconsiderate manner with a gun in his pocket, commanding submission. But there are brethren who honor the latter and shamefully reject the former. Brethren, this ought not so to be. That member who rejects the elders, who are ruling well, rejects God.

The elders with the required qualification will have business ability, also, and the members should consider their ruling in the business affairs of the church. The church should confide in their business ability and concur with them in their decisions after proper deliberations are had.

#### NOT TO REBUKE

“Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father” (I Timothy 5:1). The original word here is taken in its natural sense, and signifies one advanced in years. Not often does it at all become a young man to reprove an old man, and especially an old man in the church. The writer has ever, from early youth, regarded those who were in advance of him in years. This respect and consideration for the aged is shamefully lacking with the present generation. “Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man” (Leviticus 19:32). The boys and girls that do this will surely grow up to be honorable men and women.

#### RECEIVE NOT AN ACCUSATION

“Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses” (I Tim. 5:19). Here the term from which we get elder is taken in its official sense, and means the elder, ruler, or officer in the church. I once labored in one of the Nashville churches under Brother George Porch, who was an elder. He, I thought, was blameless before God and man and I esteemed him “exceeding highly in love for his work’s sake,” and had a man come to me saying, “Brother Porch stole \$10 from me,” I would have resented the idea and said, that is a lie. In his case I think it would have required the third witness for me to have received the accusation. Brethren, after an elder has lived blamelessly before God, the church, and the world, and has even acquired a good report among them that are without, do you not think he merits the high esteem, love, and confidence of the members of the church? Being myself an elder, I appreciate the confidence the members of the flock place in me.

Those kind words of appreciation that come from Brother A and Sister B encourage me in the work. Brethren, let your elders know that you love them and have faith and confidence in them and co-operate with them in their work in making your church what it ought to be and you will lend them wonderful aid in carrying out the Lord's plan in the development of your congregation.

I hardly think this series would be complete without a study agreeing to the above caption. We hear so much talk about the bad conduct of the present generation and wonder why the condition. The lack of correction and failure to enforce discipline at home and abroad, in the school and church classrooms and auditoriums, has brought this generation into its present status. Fathers and mothers should rear their children under a set of well ordered rules of discipline. And one of the uppermost principles that should be stamped indelibly upon the mind of the child is respect for its superior in age and those of authority over him or her.

If this is done, the teacher in school will have but little trouble with that pupil. And that child in the Sunday School Class will disdain the thought of misbehaving. Brethren, it is almost a crime the way the children misbehave in the classroom at church these days. If we allow all kinds of misbehavior in the Bible classrooms how are we to expect that child to behave in the auditorium during worship? And having been reared under a loose discipline they do not learn to view the problems of right living and Christianity seriously, and therefore are not capable of behaving themselves as Christians "in the house of God" in that way and manner that will do honor to the name. It is the imperative duty of the Bible class teacher to enforce rules of behavior, in harmony with the sublimity of the work. And should there be an obstinate boy or girl in the class, that will not yield to reason, the teacher should report such to the elders.

Brethren, I verily believe the elders have a great duty and responsibility upon their shoulders in this very matter. This condition can be successfully handled by the elders of the churches

which will add immeasurably to the spiritual status of the congregations. That this is a problem for the elders of the churches to solve I think no candid mind will question.

That the way the child is reared determines the character of the grown up person is clearly stated by the wise man: "Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). From these Scriptures we conclude that the burden of this training is meant for the parents or guardians in rearing the children in the family circles. This done properly they will enter the church and "offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe" (Hebrews 12:28).

I have ever been disposed to take the most hopeful view of matters confronting me and have, therefore, been optimistic in my views. Yet I think conditions often arise necessitating the optimist to assume the role of the pessimist in order to save the ship, and to keep her off of the rocks and reefs, that she might make a safe landing with her cargo of souls in that haven of rest over there. Therefore I wish to call attention to the condition of the membership of the churches of Christ, as I find it, in going from one place to another in meeting work. There are among the members those who are giddy, light-minded, and unstable; men and women with profane lips; those who are living in adultery, being unlawfully married; the fornicators, the dancers, the covetous, the revilers, the extortioners, the drunkards, men of short weights and measures, and those who frequent places of disrepute, where lurks all kinds of imps to tempt the Christian and decoy him into the snare of the devil. I admit that this is rather a dark painting of the church; but if there are those who deny and want to examine into this condition with me, I am ready, with the proof in my hand, having seen some of these blackest works carried on by members of the church, who were held in high esteem and serving the church in a public way.

It is the unmistakable duty of the elders to look into this condition and restrain and restore the offender to duty in the church. This condition exists in the church today largely on account of the want of an eldership to rule the church, enforcing God's law and restraining the offender. Paul wrote thus, to the elders in I Thessalonians 5:14: "And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all." The elders should admonish all the disorderly members. And Paul says, "Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear" (I Timothy 5:20). The elders should do all within their power to save the weak and offending brother, yet if he resents the instruction and refuses to amend his way, it is their duty, and that of the whole church, to withdraw from him. I held a meeting for a church in Kentucky this year, which withdraws from all their disorderly members, including those who will not attend worship on Lord's days.

Paul rebuked the Corinthian church for allowing evil workers to remain among their number: "But as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat. . . . Put away the wicked man from among yourselves" (I Corinthians 5:1, 9-13; see also II Timothy 3:1-9). Paul says, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us" (II Thessalonians 3:6). Here we are commanded, in Jesus' name, to withdraw from the disorderly brother; and when it comes to that, the elders and churches should obey that command as willingly as they would baptize a man upon the proper confession of his faith in Christ. And when a congregation of Christians, under the dominion of Christ, the chief Shepherd, obeys his com-

mand and withdraws from a brother or sister, in his name, according to Paul's instruction, then that member is withdrawn from in heaven; and cannot be restored in heaven until he or she is restored to that respective congregation on earth.

And any congregation that fellowships or in any way encourages any man or woman from whom a sister congregation has withdrawn fellowship, rebels, not against men, but against Christ, and destroys the strict discipline that Christ commands. It will not do to contend that the congregation that withdraws fellowship has not treated the erring brother right. All are human and liable to err; but Christians and Christian elders especially, are anxious to do the right thing; and if any sister congregation feels that the brother withdrawn from has been mistreated, instead of encouraging him in rebellion against his own congregation, they should go directly to the congregation that exercised the discipline. The elders of such a congregation, if approached in a Christian spirit, will correct any injustice that may have been done. Still the very fact that a brother who has been withdrawn from rebels against it shows that he himself is in the wrong whether the congregation is or not. No man who has the proper spirit and the proper humility will suffer himself to be withdrawn from."—*Gospel Advocate*, July 16, 1925.

I think the worst sin in the church, is the teaching of false doctrines and setting aside God's authority. King Saul was rebuked and condemned for this thing and Paul speaks of it as follows: "A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse" (Titus 3:10. See also Romans 16:17; I Timothy 1:19, 20; 4:1-3; 6:3-5; II Timothy 2:16-18; II Peter 2:1-3).

Paul states that one of the requirements of an elder is "holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers. For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:9-11). The elders must save the church from these false teachers if the doctrine, faith, and practice of the members are to be kept pure, by which they must be saved. Yet Paul says, "in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth" (II Timothy 2:25. See Galatians 6:1, 2). We are to use every

means which we have reason to believe God might bless; for these persons, bad as they are, are not out of the reach of God's mercy.

The members should not become angry with the elders when they go to them, "in meekness correcting them," for they are discharging their duty to them and to the Lord. Oftentimes they want to know of the elder, "What have you got to do with it? What business is it of yours how I do? You paddle your own canoe and I will paddle mine." However, this is mainly from that rebellious class who reject the elder in God's church.

Brethren, let me speak the last word to all of you. If it is the duty of the elders to deal with the offenders in the church, it is also the duty of each and every member of the church to report all cases of disorderly conduct to the elders that they may be able to admonish them. But do not do as a brother did to me not long since, who told me that one of our members was dancing, but refused to give me the name of the party. How could I correct that case? Brethren, we must have your co-operation if we keep the church in the proper spiritual condition. I pray that my efforts, in these articles, to restore God's order of rule in the churches of Christ will prove very fruitful of good, in Jesus' name; to whom the series is dedicated.

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#### PRAYER

*Unanswered yet? Faith cannot be unanswered.  
Her feet were firmly planted on the Rock;  
Amid the wildest storms she stands undaunted,  
Nor quails before the loudest thunder shock.  
She knows Omnipotence has heard her prayer,  
And cries, "It shall be done," sometime, somewhere.*

*Unanswered yet? Nay, do not say ungranted;  
Perhaps your part is not yet wholly done.  
The work began when first your prayer was uttered,  
And God will finish what He has begun.  
If you will keep the incense burning there,  
His glory you shall see sometime, somewhere.*

—Robert Browning

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## ELDERS SUPPORTED BY THE CHURCH

BY J. T. MARLIN

### THE PRINCIPLE STATED

**A**N ELDER of the church who labors both in word and in deed should be supported by the church. This is taught in I Timothy 5:17, 18, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the labourer is worthy of his reward" (A.V.). Surely, no one would want to argue that every elder of the church ought to be paid a salary when these verses specify the ones who are worthy of support; namely, "those who labor in word and doctrine." It is inferred in I Peter 5:1-3 that some elders in New Testament days were paid for service rendered. Or else the warning sounded out in verse 2 concerning using the office for "filthy lucre" is without connection when the idea of support is removed. Some remind us that this is only implied or taught indirectly. To this we reply that the teaching for paying elders is just as direct as that for paying the preacher. The principle for paying those who labor in gospel work is laid down again in I Corinthians 9:1-14.

It is understood that the elders considered in this article are qualified for the eldership and for "full-time" work. Of course a "full-time" elder is only contemplated in his individual congregation (a limitation made by the Holy Spirit) and his work purely local.

## SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

In principle, there are no disadvantages to paid elders. If so God would not have endorsed it (I Timothy 5:17, 18). However, we must not close our eyes to the abuses of men that could follow in many cases. Now let us consider some objections that are made by many good brethren.

1. *There Is no New Testament Example.*

*REPLY:* I Timothy 5:17, 18. Example necessarily inferred.

2. *Danger of Drifting Into a Presiding Elder or "Bishop."* (Ecclesiastical)

*REPLY:* In many of our elderships this condition prevails today, and he is referred to as the "respected" or "senior" elder. This is wrong whether paid or unpaid, but being paid would not create the condition, and only respect for God's word will eliminate it.

3. *Pulpit Could Be Suppressed by Inefficient Men.*

*REPLY:* (1) The Scriptures forbid this in an elder by teaching that he should not be "self-willed" (Titus 1:7). (2) Some preachers are inefficient also.

4. *Unqualified Seeking the Place for Ease, Prestige, or Power.*  
(Commonly expressed as "ego.")

*REPLY:* This would be the abuse of the office rather than the principle being wrong. Could this be a greater abuse than the practice of the preacher?

5. *A Trend Toward Professionalism.*

*REPLY:* This same charge is made against preachers today, but it is the abuse and not the principle.

6. *All Elders Might Think They Should Be Paid.*

*REPLY:* All qualified for full time work, who are doing it, should be paid (I Corinthians 9:1-14). But the ability of local church program must determine the number of paid elders.

7. *There Are Not Many Churches That Could Afford the Support of an Elder and an Evangelist at the Same Time.*

*REPLY:* This is a problem to be settled within each congregation. Like the local church problem, it must be in keeping with the ability of the congregation.

8. *There Might be a Tendency on the Part of Some to Feel Entitled to Money for any Service Rendered.*

*REPLY:* Not any more so than with the present ministry. Most people realize that he gave up secular work to devote full time to the work of the church.

9. *Members Would Expect the Elders to do All the Work and Say, "I'm Hiring My Religion Done for Me."*

*REPLY:* It could create no greater problem than the paid ministry now doing the work of the elders, members, and the preacher.

#### ADVANTAGES OF HAVING PAID ELDERS

1. Elders could devote more time to the work of an elder and thus the work of "pastoring" the flock would be improved.
2. It would result in less worldliness, indifference, and apostasy.
3. It would create greater zeal within the congregation.
4. This would free the minister (evangelist) for the work of an evangelist, more time to study (prepare sermons and lessons) and should improve his usefulness.
5. This plan would allow elders to take a personal interest in the individual problems of the members, especially new converts, etc.
6. It would cause the elders to assume their responsibility, and would teach the congregation to respect that responsibility and authority.
7. Elders could study, teach, visit, etc., more than now.
8. It would enable the elders to obtain a greater perspective of church work, and thus a greater vision.

9. This system would provide better supervision and naturally better discipline will follow.
10. This would be a step toward eliminating the "pastor system" which is the abuse and never the principle.
11. The church would have a better informed eldership because of time for study and visiting and looking after the flock.
12. They would make work more spiritual because of less distraction.
13. This plan would free evangelists to establish new congregations.
14. This would help the problem caused many times by changing preachers.

—J. T. MARLIN

The preceding article from Brother Marlin is well thought through. The reasoning is good and the conclusions are logically drawn.

On these same verses Brother J. C. McQuiddy wrote as follows:

This means that a bishop, or elder, who is faithful in taking the oversight and in teaching should be held in high esteem and maintained or supported by the church.

*Gospel Advocate*, May 18, 1916

Adam Clarke says of these verses:

Almost every critic of note allows that honor here signifies reward, stipend, wages . . . . "The Scripture saith, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox.*" This is a manifest proof that by, *honour*, in the preceding verse, the apostle means salary or wages; "Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour." . . . . The maintenance of every man in the church should be in proportion to his own labour, and the necessities of his family. He that does *no work* should have *no wages*. In the Church of Christ there never can be a sinecure. They who *minister at the alter* should *live by the alter*; the *ox that treadeth out the corn* should not be muzzled; the *labourer is worthy of his hire*: but the alter should not support him who does not *minister* at it; if the *ox won't tread out the corn*, let him go to the *common* or be *muzzled*; if the *man will not labour*, let him have *no hire*.

Mr. Clarke argues that the *elders* of the passage were the *officers* of the church and supports his contention with a quotation from Dr. Macknight.

## HONOUR THY FATHER AND MOTHER

“For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That where-with thou mightest have been profited by me is *Corban*, that is to say, Given to God; ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother; making void the word of God by your tradition” (Mark 7:10-13).

That *honour* here expresses the duty of the son to assist in the *support* of his parents is too clearly shown to admit of argument. All my life, have I been hearing preachers and teachers instructing children to *honor their father and mother* without telling them (with but one single exception) what is meant by or included in the word *honor*. That is what preachers are supposed to do; tell people the meaning of words and clauses, etc. When the Levites read the word of the law to the people it is said that they “*gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading*” (Nehemiah 8:8). So they explained to them the meaning.

On these verses Adam Clarke employs rather plain words as follows:

“Honour thy father and mother”. . . . it not only meant *respect* and *submission*, but also to *take care of a person, to nourish and support him, to enrich . . . .* And this was the sense of the law, as it respected parents. . . .

It seems to have become a practice among the Jews that if the son, instead of *supporting his father and mother*, would take the money or whatever else he had and give it as a gift to the Lord, the son was thereby excused from assisting the parents and therefore *free*. But Jesus condemns such a thing.

This custom of the individual trying to buy his approach to and acceptance with the Lord grew to large proportions among the Roman Catholics as noted in this excerpt from Adam Clarke:

This conduct was similar to the custom of certain persons who bequeath the inheritance of their children to churches or religious uses; either through terror of conscience, thus striving to purchase the kingdom of

glory; or through the persuasion of interested hireling priests. It was in this way that, in the days of popish influence, the principal lands in the nation had fallen into the hands of the church . . . . an evil that was supplanting the atonement made by the blood of the covenant, and putting deathbed grants of land, etc., in the place of Jesus Christ, and throwing the whole secular power of the kingdom into the hands of the pope and the priests. No wonder then that *they* cried out, when the monasteries were suppressed!

After writing the above Mr. Clarke climaxed his remarks with the following:

It is sacrilege to dedicate that to God which is taken away from the necessities of our *parents* and *children*; and the good that this pretends to do will doubtless be found in the catalogue of that unnatural man's crimes, in the judgment of the great day, who has thus deprived his own family of its due. To assist our *poor relatives* is our first duty; and this is a work infinitely preferable to all pious *legacies* and *endowments*.

Brethren, lets teach the rising generations the full meaning of "*the first commandment with promise*."

Will the Lord lay to our charge, to be marked up in the debit column of the ledger against us, that it is not well with the young folks of today, and that their days are shortened in the earth?

"Hath the Lord *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Samuel 15:22 A.V.). "But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever" (I Timothy 5:8).

Returning to the orginal thought in this chapter I wish to close with a quotation from Brother G. C. Brewer.

"*Nor yet for filthy lucre*"—not as a means of livelihood. This shows that the elders in the New Testament times were paid by their flocks for their work or were supported while they did the work. But they were strictly forbidden to do the work with a view to the pay. Elders, preachers, or any others who do any part of the Lord's work for money are unworthy.—*The Model Church*, pp. 36, 37

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TENURE OF ELDERS

I suppose there is controversy over every truth God has uttered in his word, and true to form there seems to be quite a variety of ideas as to the duration or length of time a man is, or may be, an elder in the church. The general idea is that of a man remaining with one congregation and serving as elder as long as he lives or is able to function in that capacity.

In another chapter the author writes of the removal of an elder who has, by his own conduct, disqualified himself. But other conditions arise which are perplexing and call for questions and may occasion much discussion. I give the view of one writer as an example:

Removing an elder from his office for any cause is a delicate matter and is worthy of most careful and prayerful handling. Carefully following divine instructions in choosing and ordaining men to the office of elder is the surest way of obviating the necessity of removing such functionary.

Although an elder may continue to be regarded as such by our Heavenly Father, yet there is no provision made in the Scriptures for him actively to serve another congregation (with which he may choose to unite) in such capacity until and unless he be ordained in the office in the latter congregation.

This may present a difficult problem. If once ordained God ever regards one as an elder, I wonder as follows: Suppose an elder moves his residence to another neighborhood and worships at another church. The quotation above states that God may regard him still as an elder but that he cannot serve here until he is appointed an elder by this church. Now, if in this case God still regards him as an elder, but he cannot so act in his newly acquired church home; what is his status? Is he an overseer with

nothing to oversee? A shepherd without a flock? Or as a king with no subjects or kingdom?

But the quotation grants that this man may be ordained an elder in congregation number two. I would like to know if this second ordination nullifies the first ordination in congregation number one?

Now it occurs to me, if when he moves to the second church God still holds him as an elder; but not allowed to serve this congregation as such until ordained in it, that God is holding him responsible for leaving and ceasing to serve the first church in which he was originally appointed an elder. Therefore, does it not appear that if God is still holding him as an elder he is also holding him to an account for the souls of the flock and that he has a stewardship committed to him that he cannot well relinquish?

And again, if this elder in congregation number one leaves and joins himself to congregation number two and there places his membership; but cannot act in the capacity of shepherd because he has not been ordained such in congregation number two and yet God is regarding him as an elder; then in which congregation does God regard him as such? It cannot be of the latter according to the statement we are examining. Then it must be of the former where he was originally appointed. And if God still regards him as an elder of church number one, will he not still hold him responsible for the souls of that congregation which would be tantamount to God's forbidding an elder to leave the congregation in which he has been ordained or appointed?

I think this line of reasoning logically follows the quotation made above.

I will here leave the reader to ponder over the status of this elder, in line with the observations I have made, and come to his own conclusion; which he will probably do better than if I should try to reach his decision for him.

But regardless as to how long the tenure of an elder may continue, or be, the author's conviction is this: That each man,

woman, boy, and girl who has a talent (ability) to do a certain good work is responsible to God for doing that job whenever and wherever the need for such a duty to be accomplished presents itself to them. He who has ability is accountable, and therefore is responsible before the Lord. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

If a man is qualified to be an elder and the need is present and urgent and the church calls on him for such service I do not see how he can refuse the appointment and remain guiltless.

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### STOP! CONSIDER!

*There is a time, we know not when,  
A point we know not where,  
That marks the destiny of man,  
To glory or despair.*

*There is a line by us unseen,  
That crosses every path;  
The hidden boundary between  
God's patience and His wrath.*

*To pass that limit, is to die;  
To die as if by stealth;  
It does not quench the beaming eyes,  
Or pale the glow of health.*

—“Our Scrapbook of Poetry”  
by Kathryn Smith

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THE DIACONATE

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HERE is much written pro and con on the eldership in the church and the qualification, appointment, and duty, or work, of elders. But we are made to wonder why so little attention is given to the place and work of deacons.

The church in New Testament times had her servants or deacons. No society can function without its servants, and still less such societies as those of the church of our Lord. "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Philippians 1:1).

As the elder is seen to have the rule over the whole congregation, in feeding and looking after the spiritual affairs and conditions, we also understand that there is a subordinate work to be done which requires the services of a second set of ministers, called deacons. The work of the deacon seems to have been that of looking after the temporal affairs or condition of the members. The work of looking after the widows in the distribution of funds or provisions in Acts, sixth chapter, gives us a good example of the work of the deacons. As the same conditions, with variations, will always exist, there will ever be the need of deacons to look after the temporal affairs of the church under the direction of the elders who have the oversight of the whole flock.

The deacon, as well as the elder, must be qualified to work in his stated place. This man must, also, have the great qualification of blamelessness before he is to be appointed to the diaconate. The apostle Paul mentions the different points in which the deacon must be blameless, which are fewer in number than those in the qualification of elders. In I Timothy 3:8, 9, 12, he lays

down the points of qualification as follows: "Deacons in like manner must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." Here Paul requires that deacons be blameless in at least seven points:

1. Must be grave
2. Not double-tongued
3. Not given to much wine
4. Not greedy of filthy lucre
5. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience
6. Let deacons be husbands of one wife
7. Ruling their children and their own houses well

The apostle does not require the deacon to possess as many points of qualification as he does of the elder; but mentions those which will prove to be more detrimental to the cause in general should the deacon not be blameless in them. The diaconate is not as high a position, nor as spiritual as the eldership, hence the qualification is not so rigid. It is evident that being the "husband of one wife" is used in the same sense with reference to the deacon as to the elder which point is discussed at length in another article.

Verse 10 says: "And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless." "Also" here shows that elders must first be proved. It is a grave mistake to appoint either elders or deacons before they have been proved. Moreover in doing so we violate the apostle's ruling.

Verse 13 is as follows: "For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." From this verse, it is quite reasonable that one should hold the position that the vacancies in the eldership should ever be supplied from the diaconate, for, "they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing." Through serving well as deacons they develop those finer qualities of character or acquire those other

points of qualification that fit and prepare one for the appointment to the eldership. This seems to be but the natural growth or development, just as the child goes first to the grade school, next to high school then to college. It is absurd to think of one's passing from the grade school to college without taking the high school studies.

Deacons may be appointed after the same fashion or manner as elders.

It is evident that the young men who carried away the dead bodies of Ananias and Sapphira, for burial, were subordinate ministers, or deacons, of the Jerusalem Church, who may have attended the apostles to execute their orders. Those who are surprised that I affirm that these "young men" mentioned in the matter of Ananias and Sapphira were the deacons or ministers of the church at Jerusalem should consider that the words: *vewteool veaviokol*, i.e., young men, are not always used to determine the ages of the persons to whom they are applied, but are frequently employed to point out their offices or function, both by the Greek and Latin writers.

These first deacons were evidently chosen from among the Jews who were born in Palestine as they were suspected by the foreign Jews of partiality in distributing the offerings which were given for the support of the poor. To remedy this situation the apostles ordered seven other deacons appointed who were to serve in that part of the work of the church at Jerusalem, which was done, the selection being from the foreign Jews converted to Christianity, with one from among the proselytes; for there were members in the Jerusalem Church from all the sects of the Jews and it was proper that due consideration should be given to each of these classes in the selection of the deacons to avoid just such difficulties as that which then confronted them.

One in writing of the seven deacons of Acts 6, gave the following:

The seven were chosen for this special work, not because they were qualified to do it, but because they possessed all the natural gifts needed for

the special work to be done, and which would aid the supernatural in the work."

Why, the very fact that "they possessed all the natural gifts needed for the special work to be done," shows "they were qualified to do it," which is the **VERY REASON** they were appointed. The above position is a fair sample of the work of modern scribes and exegetes who strike at the very foundation of God's order in his church. Who ever heard of the supernatural needing the aid of the natural; but contrarywise the natural may need the aid of the supernatural.

The "natural gifts" he said the seven possessed were as follows: "Men of good report," "Full of the Spirit and of wisdom," "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." And he says these were the natural gifts, when as a matter of fact, every one of them were acquired gifts through obedience to the will of God and were the same as the points of qualification for elders and deacons as given by Paul to Timothy and Titus.

If a man does not qualify himself, through faith and good works, to do a good work for the Lord, he most certainly will not be chosen and qualified by the Lord for that work. Even Judas would not have been chosen for the work the Lord had him to do had he not beforehand qualified himself to do that very class of work.

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### NEEDS

*"As a violin needs a player,  
As a temple needs a plan,  
As a painter needs a canvas,  
Is the need of God to man."*

—Author unknown

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## DEACONESES

**H**AVING just noticed the fact that the early churches had deacons, and while discussing the nature and scope of their activities it occurs to the author that an article on the deaconess is not only in tune with the Scriptures but is also needed and very timely.

It is clear that the early churches had deaconesses in them.

As is noted in the beginning of the former chapter the New Testament church had her servants, which is the meaning of the term deacon. And should the church have a female—a woman servant—she would be called a deaconess. Some of the churches, at least, had deaconesses, Romans 16:1, “I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church that is at Cenchreae.” There is, oftentimes, work for the poor, in the sick room and elsewhere that women can do much more effectively than men. It is my earnest conviction that the churches today should have two or three deaconesses to serve them in various duties.

Paul seems to pause, right in the middle of the qualification of deacons, long enough to briefly state the qualification of the deaconess. He says (I Timothy 3:11), “Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.” Now concerning this qualification of the deaconess a careful study of the brief statement by Paul will portray a high specimen of womanhood is here contemplated for appointment to serve in God’s kingdom in an official capacity. Look well to the words: “grave,” “not slanderers,” “temperate,” “faithful in all things.” Can you say more in so few words? The woman with these traits is quite well fortified against Satan with all his devices. They

include a well developed character along with a knowledge of the Sacred Oracles.

This woman will "adorn" herself "in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" and "with good works" (I Timothy 2:9, 10). She will not be "idle, wandering about from house to house" as "tattlers and busybodies, speaking things which she "ought not," but will "bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (I Timothy 5:13, 14). Her adorning will also "be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Peter 3:4). Those few all inclusive words mentioned by Paul will keep the women "in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:3-5). Thus Paul, in few words, gave the qualification that fully prepares and fits and equips the woman to be a faithful servant or deaconess in his service.

Paul also wrote to the Philippians, "Yet, I beseech thee also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life." These were evidently experienced Christian women chosen as deaconesses in the Philippian church. Probably Euodia and Syntyche of the preceding verse are referred to here, however some noted writers express the opinion that Syntyche was a man, the certainty of which we have no means of determining.

Mosheim, the historian, makes mention of deaconesses as follows:

"All the other Christian churches followed the example of that of Jerusalem, in whatever related to the choice and office of the deacons. Some, particularly the eastern churches, elected deaconesses, and chose for that purpose matrons or widows of eminent sanctity, who also ministered to the

necessities of the poor, and performed several other offices, that tended to the maintenance of order and decency in the church.

That there are many needs in most every congregation of disciples of Christ for the service of a deaconess may not easily be denied. Women are much better prepared to care for many conditions than any man. Does one wonder *What Conditions?* Here are a few: The sick room; tending girls and women at baptisms; looking after delinquent girls of school age and also members of church; to serve and encourage them at weddings; in maternity cases; go to the rescue of some poor fallen girl whom some beast has humbled, that a discouraged soul might be saved instead of being ostracized and consigned to complete ruin, as is too often the case. Does a child of God hold back from proffering such help? Then what if she were your sister or daughter?

Yes, a good mother in Israel with the status of a deaconess may be the means—the church working through her—of saving many fallen girls, and warning others against the dangers of the dance and petting parties, etc.

When Paul addressed himself to “the aged women” as “teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be *sober*, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:3-5) may we not understand this work to come within the range of the duty of a deaconess? And will not the fact that such a woman is appointed by the church and working under a well-ordered eldership lend much prestige to her work with the above mentioned conditions?

Will not her teaching the “young women” to love home life and the members of her family assist in breaking up divorces and cases of juvenile delinquency before they occur instead of breaking up homes and blasting the hopes of a young husband and robbing the children of that heritage in life to which every child born into this world is entitled? Does this greatly needed labor and influence not clearly set itself forth as the duty of a deaconess? I firmly believe that a woman serving the church in this

capacity will have far greater success with the young women than to try to accomplish it on her own.

Moreover, I believe the New Testament teaches that the early church had deaconesses and that it is the duty of every church where there is the need (and what church is made up of male members only) to appoint deaconesses to serve in a much-needed capacity to the good of the *CAUSE* which in turn is to the honor of God.

Now for the concluding thoughts let's look once more to the qualification of this character who may accomplish such a noble work in the church of our Lord.

1. Must be grave
2. Not slanderers
3. Temperate
4. Faithful in all things

Brethren, think on these things.

After the former part of this article was given into the hands of the printers, I was challenged on my claim that the New Testament authorizes "such an unscriptural thing as a deaconess in the church," and also the R. V. rendering of 1 Timothy 3:11, I see the necessity of a further study of the matter.

I was surprised that anyone would deny that Phoebe in Romans 16:1, was a deaconess. The marginal rendering of servant in the text is *deaconess*. I wish here to consider the Greek for deacon in 1 Timothy 3:8 and for servant in Romans 16:1.

Deacon: 1 Timothy 3:8 (1247 *diākānēō*, *dee-ak-on-eh'o*; to be an attendant, wait upon; to act as a Christian deacon; minister; serve; use the office of a deacon.—*James Strong's Concordance*.

Phoebe—a servant, Romans 16:1 (1249) *diakōnōs*, *dee-ak'-on-os*, to run errands; an attendant, a waitress; a teacher; a deacon or deaconess; deacon, minister, servant.—*James Strong's Concordance*.

Now look at Romans 16:1, "I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, who is a *servant* (margin, *deaconess*) of the church that is

at Cenchreæ: that ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of the Saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever matter (A. V., business) she may have need of you: for she herself also hath been a helper of many, and of mine own self."

The context is clear, that Phoebe was serving in some chosen, selected and appointed capacity of the church on this mission to Rome. For want of a more suitable term to describe her (official) status, I with the scholars call her a deaconess.

"Let him that readeth understand" (Mark 13:14). Now to the "wives" in 1 Timothy 3:11, I am criticised for accepting the rendering of this verse in the Revised Version which reads "women in like manner."

In the preface to the American Standard Edition there is this explanation "*Accordingly, . . . . by the rule of procedure which the committee followed, the translation of 1611 (King James) held its place in every instance until an alteration commanded the votes of two-thirds of the revisers.*"

This translation being the work of one hundred one of the ripest scholars of the age who were provided some three hundred ancient manuscripts of the New Testament writings which were denied the 1611 translators with this new committee headed by none other than that prince of Biblical Lexicographers, J. Henry Thayer, Secretary of the New Testament company.

So the change from "Even so must their wives be grave," in the King James Translation to "women in like manner must be grave," in the American Standard was made by the authority of the preponderance of at least two-thirds the weight of the world's best scholarship. And I ask the plain, blunt question: Who am I, that I may buck such authority?

Now the word for "Wives" and "women" in 1 Timothy 3:11 is (1135). *gunē, goo-nay'*; a woman; spec. a wife; wife woman"—*James Strong Concordance*.

Adam Clarke says: "I believe the apostle does not mean here the wives either of the bishops or deacons in particular, but the Christian women in general . . . . . but if the apostle had those

termed deaconesses in his eye, which is quite possible, the words are peculiarly suitable to them."

And on Romans 16:1 Mr. Clarke says: "Phoebe is here termed a servant, a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea. There were deaconesses in the primitive Church, whose business it was to attend the female converts at baptism . . . to visit the sick, and those who were in prison, and, in short, perform those religious offices for the female part of the Church which could not with propriety be performed by men. . . . In the tenth or eleventh century the order became extinct in the Latin Church, but continued in the Greek Church till the end of the twelfth century. See *Broughton's Dictionary*, article Deaconess."

I give, at this point, some interesting excerpts from *God's Woman* by C. R. Nichol under the caption

#### THE DEACONESS

"I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church that is at Cenchreae" (Romans 16:1).

(The word rendered "deacon" in 1 Timothy 3:8 and the word rendered "servant" in Romans 16:1 are the same word in the Greek text. The American Standard Version gives "deaconess" in the margin of Romans 16:1 as the meaning of the word "servant" in the text.

Phoebe was a servant, "deaconess," in the church at Cenchreae. Though we do not have a detailed account of the work done by her, she was by Paul commended to the Church at Rome as a faithful sister and "deaconess," who had helped him and others.

Those who love the Lord are anxious to see his cause prosper, and function in every righteous way. The student of the New Testament often inquires: "In the days of the apostles there were women in the church called 'deaconesses,' why is it that we do not have such women in the church today?" This question is then followed by another, namely: "What were the qualifications of the deaconess; and what were her duties?"

#### QUALIFICATIONS

In First Timothy, third chapter, verses one to eight. Paul makes known the traits of character and acquisitions one must

have to be a bishop in the church of God. At verse eight he begins detailing the qualifications of the man who may be a deacon in the church. He says: "Deacons in like manner must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless."

At verse eleven, *before* he had concluded the discussion of the qualifications of deacons, he says, "Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things."

Having made this statement found in verse eleven, he immediately returns to the discussion of the character of those who serve as deacons.

Has this question occurred to you: "Why did Paul turn from the discussion of the deacon, make the observation found in verse eleven about women, and then return to the discussion of the deacons?"

In the King James Version verse eleven reads: "Even so must their wives," etc. You will not overlook the fact that the words *must* and *their* in verse eleven are *italicized* that you may know they are supplied words, words supplied by the translators—that these words do not appear in the Greek text. In the American Standard Version we have: "Women in like manner," instead of, "Even so must their wives." The word "women" is given in place of the word "wives." The word rendered "wives" in the King James Version does not necessarily mean "wife."

It has been thought by some that Paul had reference to the "wives" of the deacons in the passage we now study. Evidently that was the view of the translators of the King James Version. If you hold that view, you are confronted with the question: "Why is it that Paul makes reference to the wives of the deacons, making certain qualifications necessary for one to be a deacon; when in the same connection he had been discussing the bishops, but makes no reference to the qualifications of the wife of a man who could be a bishop?"

To me it seems absurd to contend that Paul when discussing the qualifications of a deacon would turn aside abruptly and mention the character of the deacon's wife; but makes no reference to the character of the bishop's wife, when in the same connection he had discussed the qualifications of the bishops, but did not say one word about the qualifications of the bishop's wife. In truth verse eleven in the passage does not have reference to the wife of a deacon.

Some have insisted that verse eleven is a reference to all women. That all women should possess the traits of character mentioned in the verse it is agreed; but I am unable to persuade myself that the apostle while discussing the qualifications of deacons, a particular group of men to whom certain work has been assigned in the church, would introduce into the discussion a statement which in no sense relates to the qualifications of the deacons. He did not make an observation touching "all women" and then return to the discussion of the deacons.

Paul was telling of the qualifications of the deacons, a selected group of men who serve in the church, and in the midst of the discussion he turned aside to make reference to the female-deacon, or deaconess, and her qualifications. There were such women in the church in the days of Paul, women who were servants of the church. There would have been nothing illogical in inserting the word about the deaconess while discussing the qualifications of the deacons, and that is what he did! Having stated the qualifications of the deaconess, he returned to the discussion of the deacon and his qualifications.

#### THE DEACONESS: HER QUALIFICATIONS

The deaconess must be "grave, not slanderers; temperate, faithful in all things" (1 Timothy 3:11).

*Grace:* Not flighty, and giddy; but serious, dignified, sober, self-possessed, imperturbable.

*Not Slanderers:* Never injuring the character of others by word spoken or written; nor by insidious insinuations; not a shrew.

*Temperate:* Showing self-control; self-possessed.

*Faithful In All Things:* Discharging one's duties in all the relationships of life.

### THE WORK OF A DEACONESS

Though we do not have a detailed account of the work done by a deaconess in the days of the apostles, or what she may do now; it seems to me that any thoughtful person who is conversant with the work of the church Christ has described in the New Testament can visualize much that the church can do, that no one can do as well as a faithful Christian woman. Contemplate the following, which comes to me, detailed by a Christian minister:

"It was brought to the attention of the congregation where I labor, that a child in the home of one of the members of the congregation needed medical attention, and that the family was not financially able to meet the expense necessary in having a doctor and securing medicine." What was needed in this case? Medicine only—or were there other pressing demands in the home? Does some one say: "Let the elders go to the home and learn what is needed, and supply the needs." Who is it that does not know that it is seldom the elders or deacons know what is needed in their own homes when all are well, to say nothing about knowing the needs in a home when sickness is rife? Thinkest thou it would be the part of wisdom to send men on a tour of inspection in a home where there is sickness with the children, or the mother in the home? They would know little more after the visit than they did before. Under such conditions the wise thing to do is to send some sister, or more than one sister to make the needed investigation; not only to learn if the physician's services are needed; but to learn what else is needed in the home—clothes, linens, articles for sanitation, and other necessities in the sick room. The minister recited: "Two sisters were sent to the home of the sick, with authority to supply what was needed, and have the articles bought charged to the church." This they did,

as servants of the church, and in such service they were functioning as deaconesses of that congregation!

It should be remembered though that every pressing demand for assistance cannot await the assembling of the congregation and the detailing of some one to look after the needs of the one in want; hence there should be some one who may be called at any time to righteously attend to such matters as servants of the church; and as servants of the church discharge such work when it is brought to their attention. In some instances the elders, or deacons, can meet the demand for help; but there are occasions when they are not qualified to make some needed investigations, hence the need for women servants—the deaconess, who may be called at any time to function in the work to which they have been assigned.

Attention comes to a member of the church that there is a widow in her community with children, that they are in needy circumstances. The member may be in position to supply the needed things; but is that the wise course to follow? If the needs be supplied by the individual, is it not true that the individual gets the credit for the act of charity; and the church of the Lord of which he is a member is wholly unknown, gets no glory from the manifestation of the spirit the Lord taught. I hold that the deaconesses of the church should have been contacted, and should have supplied the needed things, either from the store-room of the church, or secured them from a store. In making delivery of the needed things to the object of charity it should be brought to the attention of the one helped that the aid supplied is from the church of Christ. “Unto him be glory in the church” (Ephesians 3:21).

More than one time I have been humiliated when coming to a baptismal service for some woman to find she was not properly clothed for the occasion, and more, to find she was not attended by some sister of the congregation who would assist her in the necessary preparation for baptism. (This has happened to the author.) Yes, there were numbers of sisters in the congregation

who would have been glad to have served in preparing her for the immersion, but each thought Sister Blank would accompany the lady to the dressing room and prepare her for the service. No one thinks it the work of the elders, or deacons, to attend a lady and assist her in preparing her clothing for immersion. There should be in every congregation some sensible sisters whose duty it is to lend all necessary aid to the women to be baptized. *They should be definitely appointed to such work, and serving in that capacity they will be ministering as deaconesses.* (Italics mine.)

It should be known in every congregation that Sister Phoebe, Sister Priscilla, and Sister Dorcas are deaconesses in the congregation, and that when their assistance is needed they are to be called. Many congregations are falling short of the work that should be done, *because they do not have women appointed to do certain work for the church.* (Italics mine.) You know of some work that should be done, but you are not financially able to do it, and it is passed by; but if you knew Sister Phoebe was a servant of the church, and was in position to see the work done by the church, you would call her and accompany her on the mission of mercy. Humanity would be blessed, and the church fill a place of service.

The church must carry on; and to properly function under divine directions there must be elders and deacons doing the work assigned them; and as there was need for the deaconess in the early days of the church, so there is now (pp. 159-166).

The churches, preachers and individual members need to be *blasted* out of their complacent indifference to the New Testament teaching, and the need, of a Scriptural eldership, or presbytery, the diaconate, including the deaconess, and membership.

## SHOULD WE HAVE DEACONESES TODAY?

By THOS. C. WHITFIELD

AS HAS already been pointed out the New Testament seems to clearly teach that there were deaconesses in the early church. The Apostle Paul in Romans 16:1 calls Phoebe a servant or a deaconess of the church. It is not possible for us to determine whether she had assumed this position of her own accord or whether the church had appointed her to it; but it is certain that the service she performed was not condemned by the Apostle. We might well reason therefore that if the church in Cenchrea appointed her to this service and Paul did not condemn it, congregations today have the authority to do likewise. On the other hand if she assumed the work then other good women today may do likewise. The conclusion is inevitable, therefore, that the church today may and should have deaconesses when they are needed.

Let us now look at the matter from a practical point of view. One of the most striking things observed at most every meeting of the church is that the women outnumber the men. It perhaps could be conservatively estimated that 65 per cent of the membership of the average congregation is composed of women. Because we have a feeling that men should do everything we are leaving a vast reservoir of human resources untapped. We have assigned work to a few men and left the many Godly women with nothing to do.

Moreover, women are often more faithful and loyal to the church than are men. It is significant that the women stood near the Cross of Christ when all of the men but John had fled.

If we go to the services of the church today we will find women are more faithful in attendance than men. When given a job to do, women are usually willing to work long and tirelessly until the task is done.

There are some things in which women are more capable than men. These jobs are either left undone or they are done poorly. It is a mistake to have men trying to do that for which they are not suited and it is a sin for congregations to let things go undone rather than to have women do them. The statements in the foregoing chapter lists a number of things in which women are more efficient than men.

In our present economy men spend a great amount of time working in order to make a living while women often have time which they could give to the Lord's work. In almost every congregation there are several women with considerable free time. If they were given work to do the cause of Christ would profit by their leisure.

From these few brief observations it is evident that there is wonderful power in almost every congregation which is inactive. Certainly there are things women cannot do. They have a sphere in which they can work and the Bible restricts them to this sphere, but in our eagerness to keep women from doing the wrong thing we have gone into the ditch on the other side of the road. The women should work under the direction and immediate supervision of the elders of the congregation. One of the responsibilities of the eldership is to keep all the members of the congregation busy doing the work best suited to them.

In James 4:17 the writer lays down this rule: "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." If it was good for the church to have deaconesses in the New Testament days it is good for us to have them today. Applying this principle is it not a sin for congregations today to follow the practice of using such a few of its membership in carrying out the Lord's work?

Paul said in writing to the Ephesians: "But speaking the truth

in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:15, 16). Notice especially the expressions: "that which **EVERY** joint supplieth," and "according to the effectual working in the measure of **EVERY** part."

We have made the mistake of working only a few men and have left the women with nothing to do yet the women are certainly parts of the one body. If the elders in congregations of the church would set up programs of activity by which this great reservoir of untapped resources could be utilized, there, no doubt, would be great "increase of the body." If such programs are not developed, the elders are neglecting to do that which is good and may incur the disfavor of Almighty God.

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### CONFESSiON

*Last night my little boy confessed to me  
Some childish wrong;  
And kneeling at my knee  
He prayed with tears—  
"Dear God, make me a man  
Like Daddy—wise and strong,  
I know you can."*

*Then while he slept  
I knelt beside his bed,  
Confessed my sins,  
And prayed with low-bowed head,  
"O God, make me a child  
Like my child here—  
Pure, guileless,  
Trusting Thee with faith sincere."*

—Author unknown

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A STUDY OF HEBREWS 13:7 AND 17

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**V**ERSE 7. "Remember them which *have* the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God."

Verse 17. "Obey them that *have* the rule over you, and submit yourselves." (King James' Translation.)

The American Standard Edition, reads as follows:

Verse 7. "Remember them that *had* the rule over you, men that spake unto you the word of God."

Verse 17. "Obey them that *have* the rule over you, and submit to them."

There is a diversity of opinions as *to whom* the apostle alludes in verse seven. It is thought by some that, by the clause "men that spake unto you the word of God," Paul had in mind the apostles who spake the word of the Lord unto them first handed; while others think the reference is to those who had been elders over them and had deceased at this time. The balance of evidence has not been quite enough favoring either position, in the estimation of the author, to influence him to a decision between the two opinions. And it seems that *opinion* is about as positive as one can be here, while there is no controversy, of which I know, over whom the apostle contemplates in verse seventeen—the members of the eldership.

Philip Doddridge has provided us with a very interesting *paraphrase* of verse seven, and with the thoughts of Bishop Lloyd.

And let me now urge you to *remember those* dear and venerable Persons, *who having formerly presided over you in holy Things, have spoken to you the Word of GOD, whose Course is now finished.* Tho' all your intercourse with them is for the present cut off, do not however forget their In-

structions, and their Examples; but be mindful of that *Faith* which they taught, and which they exercised. And let it be your great Care to imitate them, *considering the End of their Conversation*. Reflect on the happy manner in which they quitted Life, on that Support which they found, in their latest Moments, from the Truths they had taught you, and on that heroick Resolution with which some of them were animated to meet even Martyrdom itself in that sacred Cause: And let the Remembrance of these Things engage you stedfastly to retain their Faith, and courageously to follow their Steps. And remember for your farther Encouragement, that tho' the most faithful Ministers of the Gospel die; yet as that sacred Dispensation still continues immutable, *so Jesus Christ*, the great Guardian of those who faithfully adhere to it, in the Tenor of his Declarations, as well as in the Glories of his divine Nature, *[is] the same Yesterday, To-day, and for ever*; and therefore can well support you, by whomsoever you may be forsaken."

*The Family Expositor*, Vol. VI. pp. 145, 146

*"Presided over you."*

Bishop Lloyd, thinks this may refer to *James the Apostle*, and to *James*, commonly called the *first Bishop of Jerusalem*; both of which had been put to Death there before this Epistle was written.—Our English Version here is very far from being justifiable, *Remember them which have the Rule over you*; whereas they were now *dead*. It should have been, *Who have presided, or had the Rule, over you*; or as I have rendered the two Clauses in Connection, *Who having presided over you, have spoken to you the Word of GOD*."  
*Ibid*, p. 145

B. W. Johnson in his Explanatory Notes comments on the two verses as follows:

Verse 7. "*Remember them that had the rule over you*. As the past tense is used the rulers named, it is thought, were dead. At the date of this epistle, James the brother of John, and 'James the brother of our Lord,' both so closely connected with the Jerusalem church, had suffered martyrdom. The last named, whose martyrdom is recorded by Josephus, was put to death in A.D. 63."

Verse 17. "*Obey them that have the rule over you*. Your elders or bishops. *They watch for your souls*. Give them deference on this account, and because they must give account to the Master of those committed to their trust."

Robert Milligan in his Commentary On Hebrews, wrote as follows:

Verse 7. The reference is to such men as Stephen, James the brother of John, and other faithful preachers of the Gospel who had formerly proclaimed to the Hebrews the good word of God, and whose whole course of

life, resulting as it did in a happy and triumphant death, was worthy of their admiration and imitation.

"After the author had thus held up the past as a mirror to the present, and had called to remembrance the gaps which death had made in the church of the Hebrews, what could be more appropriate", says Delitzsch, "than to raise his thoughts to the immutable Lord, exalted high above all change?" This he does in the following paragraph. p. 375

Verse 17. These were the elders or Overseers of the church, to whom were committed (1) the duty of instructing the members; and (2) the duty of watching over and governing them. So we learn from many passages in the New Testament. . . .

If it is the duty of the elders to teach, it is also manifestly the duty of the other members of the church to receive their lawful instructions; and if it is the duty of the former to rule, it is equally the duty of the latter to submit to all their acts of discipline which are not in violation of the law of Christ. pp. 380, 381

In 1910 when Robert H. Boll wrote Lessons On Hebrews he was of the persuasion expressed in this quotation from his book.

"Them that had the rule over you." To whom does it refer? (Verse 7) Note it is not those that "have" but those who "had" the rule. They have it no more. Not those who "speak," but those who once "spake," the word of God. They had passed away, for he says "considering the issue of their life." So their lives were finished. We must conclude that they were the men of God of old—patriarchs, kings, leaders, judges; prophets especially, from Moses to Malachi. They are held up as examples repeatedly. (See Heb. 11; Jas. 5:10; Matt. 5:12)

But when in verse 17 we meet the expression, "Obey them that have the rule over you," it can have reference only to the elders, for they are those that watch in behalf of your souls. p. 208

#### EDGAR J. GOODSPEED'S TRANSLATION

Verse 7. Do not forget your former leaders, the men who brought you God's message. Remember how they ended their lives and imitate their faith.

Verse 17. Obey your leaders and give way to them, for they are keeping watch in defense of your souls, as men accountable for the trust. Make their work a joy and not a grief, for that would be the worse for you.

## WEYMOUTH'S TRANSLATION

Verse 7. Remember your former leaders—it was they who brought you the word of God. Bear in mind how they ended their lives, and imitate their faith.

Verse 17. Obey your leaders and be submissive to them, because they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will have to give account; so that they may do this with joy and not with lamentation—for that would be to no advantage to you.

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## YEA, LIFT THEM UP

*Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors:  
And the King of glory will come in.  
Who is the King of glory?  
Jehovah strong and mighty,  
Jehovah mighty in battle.  
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors:  
And the King of glory will come in.  
Who is this King of glory?  
Jehovah of hosts,  
He is the King of glory.*

—Psalms 24:7-10

## PART THREE

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#### PAUL AN ELDER OR DID TIMOTHY HAVE TWO GIFTS

I HAVE BEEN challenged on my statement that I believe Paul was an elder. Paul was an apostle born out of due season, but he was "not a whit behind the chiefest of the apostles" (2 Corinthians 11:5). He, after recounting many of the hardships through which he had passed, said: "Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:28). There seems to have been resting upon him a large responsibility with reference to the churches whether planted by himself or others.

It seems absurd to me to think that Paul, a chosen vessel unto the Lord, who was "not a whit behind the chiefest of the apostles" (Peter, James, and John) and who "labored more abundantly than they all" (I Corinthians 15:13), and had the care of all the churches upon him, was not qualified to be an elder in the Church of the Lord simply because he did not have a wife and children, but preachers and others hoot at the idea that Paul "an old bachelor" was qualified to be an elder. The main reason I believe he was an elder is by deduction from what he said to Timothy about the gift he had: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (I Timothy 4:14). "For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands" (II Timothy 1:6). My contention being, that Paul was an elder (presbyter) or that Timothy had more than one gift imparted to him by the imposition of hands. There may be others, but I have known of

only one man, who contends that Timothy had two gifts bestowed upon him at so many times. Adam Clarke thought that Paul and the elders, both at the same time, laid their hands upon Timothy together to impart the one gift he had. However, I think this position to be quite unwarranted. Another has spoken as follows:

It is unreasonable to assume that the two passages above refer to the same incident in the life of Timothy. Unquestionably, two different occasions are indicated and, therefore, two different gifts from God ("there are diversities of gifts." I Corinthians 12:4) were bestowed upon Timothy according to these passages. In the first instance, he received some gift through the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (signifying the eldership or elderhood as a group); and, in the second place, Paul individually laid his hands upon Timothy in order that he might impart unto him some spiritual gift which would be helpful to the recipient in carrying on his work as a Christian evangelist. As an apostle, Paul had the ability, the power, and the authority so to bless Timothy. The impartation of the spiritual gift to his son in the gospel increased the young minister's responsibility unto God."—A. L. DEVENY, in *The Church and Its Elders*, p. 49.

He refers to "diversities of gifts," and that Timothy had two gifts, one from the presbytery and another from Paul. If that be true Timothy is the only one of whom we read in the New Testament who had hands laid on him at two separate times. Was the presbytery able to bestow only one gift and not able to bestow the one Paul imparted to him? Or was Paul not able to bestow the gift the presbytery bestowed upon Timothy?

Now, Paul in writing about the gifts has this to say: "Now there are diversities of gifts, . . . For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues" (I Corinthians 12:4, 8-10). It seems from this that each man received one individual gift. And these gifts seem to have been imparted by the hands of the apostles.

One would need to be inspired or endowed with the Holy

Spirit to be able to impart a spiritual gift to another and there is nothing to show the eldership or presbytery to have been so endowed. Nor was inspiration a prerequisite to or of the eldership. That is, the eldership as such was not inspired then or now. And not being inspired the presbytery certainly had not the innate power to confer a spiritual gift upon anyone. Nor would the presbytery have power to lay hands on others and impart a spiritual gift that had been bestowed upon it by the hands of an apostle. This we all have contended for in the matter of spiritual gifts.

Nor is there any other occurrence in the whole New Testament that indicates that it took a plurality of men to bestow a spiritual gift by imposing the hands which must have been the case if the presbytery without Paul imparted such a gift to Timothy.

#### WHAT THEN IS THE ANSWER?

I am forced, by the above reasoning to conclude that Paul being an apostle had power to impart a gift to Timothy and that he was also an elder and that thus the act of bestowing a gift upon Timothy by an elder or presbyter it is attributed to the presbytery. I can state boldly that I have seen the Atlantic Ocean while as a matter of fact I have laid eyes on a very small portion of it. And when Paul imparted a gift to Timothy it was done by the apostleship.

And Paul mentions this gift, *NOT GIFTS*, in each of his letters to the young evangelist. Should Timothy have had two gifts do you think Paul, in speaking of such important a matter, would have mentioned only one of them in his first epistle and wait to mention the other one in the second epistle not knowing he would ever write the second one?

I am quite sure no elder, by virtue of being an elder, could impart any gift to anyone, but when spiritual gifts were imparted by the presbytery, as in the case of Timothy, that it was by an apostle who was also an elder and in that case he had the power

to impart the gift by virtue of being an apostle and not by being an elder.

Should anyone know of reasons wherein my reasoning and position are unsound let him come to the fore with arguments based upon sound reasoning, and not with assertions growing out of a conviction based upon a false interpretation, or a misunderstanding, of the Scriptures.

#### FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND QUESTIONS

The gift (or gifts?) Timothy had were obviously imparted by the hands of one or more of the apostles. The apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit. They could impart gifts by imposing their hands. But we have generally understood that the recipient of a gift, by their hands, could perform some miraculous feat but could not impart the gift received, or any other, to others by the imposition of his hands.

There is no question about the gift of II Timothy 1:6 which is clearly claimed by Paul. But the gift of I Timothy 4:14 which is attributed to the presbytery is in doubt as to from whom received. However, we know it was from the presbytery; but who constituted that particular presbytery or eldership? That presbytery obviously had apostles, or at least, one apostle in the number. But there is no case on record which required a plurality of men, imposing their hands, to impart a single gift. So it is reasonable to conclude that some one of the apostles was in the eldership of some congregation and imparted this gift to Timothy by himself alone which is attributed to the presbytery. And as there is not a case on record which clearly shows that any one person received two gifts from different apostles at different times; and that Timothy did receive a gift from Paul, I conclude that, unless it can be shown that Timothy had two separate gifts, or that one **MAY** have two different gifts, he (Paul) is the apostle and presbyter who imparted this one gift to Timothy. I think most everybody will agree that this position is more tenable than that presented by Adam Clarke, *viz.*,

The word *χαρισμα* here must refer to the *gifts* and *graces* of the

*Divine Spirit*, which Timothy received when set apart to the work of an evangelist by the imposition of *St. Paul's hands* (II Tim. 1:6), and by that of the *presbytery* or *eldership*; for it MOST EVIDENTLY APPEARS, from this verse and that above quoted, that he received this DOUBLE *imposition*, not probably at *different times*, but on one and the same occasion.

While I believe the two passages refer to the same incident and one single gift I fail to find any *EVIDENCE* from which it APPEARS that this gift was bestowed upon Timothy by the hands of a plurality of men, at the same setting.

If Timothy had only one gift it was bestowed upon him by the apostle Paul and by an elder (he being the elder) and therefore the task of proving something rests upon the shoulders of those who deny that Paul was an elder. If someone wants to try his skill I am no one to object. I want my position overthrown if Scripture will do it; for I would rather be right than sorry.

#### QUESTIONS

1. With what other apostle, who was an elder, was Timothy associated closely enough that you would think imparted this gift to Timothy?
2. What other person had two gifts imparted to him by two different apostles?
3. What two or more apostles laid their hands upon the same person to impart a single gift?
4. What incident indicates that any one received a gift by the hands of anyone *OTHER* than an apostle?
5. What incident indicates that two apostles laid their hands upon the same person to impart a single gift or to impart one each to that person?
6. Do you argue that the presbytery was inspired and had the power to impart spiritual gifts?
7. Timothy was commissioned to appoint presbyteries and think you that a presbytery appointed by him could in turn lay their hands on him and impart a Spiritual gift?

8. Does all this not show that there has been much careless thinking and faulty reasoning along these lines?

I hold no other position which depends upon Paul's being an elder for it to stand.

I hold to the conviction presented in this article for no reason other than that I think it is based on sound Scriptural reasoning.

Three different positions are presented in this chapter:

“Two gifts by different men on separate occasions.” A. L. DEVENY

“One gift by plurality of men on same occasion.” ADAM CLARKE

“One gift by only one man.”—THE AUTHOR

Which position, if either, is correct?

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### MOULDERS

*I took a piece of plastic clay,  
And idly fashioned it one day,  
And as my fingers pressed it still,  
It molded, yielded to my will.*

*I came again when days were past,  
The bit of clay was hard at last,  
The form I gave it, still it bore,  
And I could change that form no more.*

*A far more precious thing than clay,  
I gently formed from day to day,  
And molded with God's power and art,  
A young child's soft and yielding heart.*

*I came again when years were gone,  
It was a man I looked upon;  
He still that early impression wore,  
And man could change him nevermore.*

—“Our Scrapbook of Poetry”  
by Kathryn Smith

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PAR'AL-LEL-IZED

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I HAVE often stated, both in private and publicly, that there is not one single quality required of an elder that is not also required of every other member of the church. To this position no one has ever dared, in my presence, to offer one word in contradiction.

Under the above caption I list in two columns the qualification of the elder and the duties of what may be called the "lay" or common member. I am thoroughly convinced that he who has acquired, by practice, the qualification for an elder is no better in God's judgment than should be every other member of the church.

Does one ask, "Then why state the qualification of an elder if all the members are required to develop the same characteristics?" The answer is obvious. The Lord knew the members would not all make that forward advance but would be like those to whom Paul speaks in Hebrews 5:12, "For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food." And to vouchsafe, the well being and good of the church and make sure that the progress of the flock not be retarded by those who should have but did not qualify he specifically states that men out of that class which does qualify, to receive the promise of the inheritance, be chosen and appointed to the Presbytery or Eldership.

I hope the listings in the two columns will not only assist the elders in the maintenance of the great ideals of Christian character but that each individual member of the church, as you,

may be found striving harder and harder, ever resisting the temptations along life's way and building that house in which God will be pleased to reside as he hath said: "What manner of house will ye build me? saith the Lord: Or what is the place of my rest?" (Acts 7:49).

#### QUALIFICATION OF ELDERS

I. *As a Ruler: Overseer, Bishop, Elder, Shepherd*; see Acts 20:28; 1 Thess. 5:12.

1. Rules well own house: I Tim. 3:4.
2. Has children in subjection: I Tim. 3:4.
3. Faithful children: Titus 1:6.
4. Husband of one wife: Titus 1:6.
5. Not self-willed: Titus 1:7.
6. Patient: I Tim. 3:3.
7. Self-controlled: Titus 1:8.
8. Gentle: I Tim. 3:3.
9. Not a novice: I Tim. 3:6.
10. Just: Titus 1:8.
11. Vigilant: I Tim. 3:2.

II. *As a Feeder: Pastor, Shepherd.*

See Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2.

1. Apt to teach: I Tim. 3:2.
2. Holding the faithful word: Titus 1:9.
3. Sober minded: Titus 1:8.
4. Not a novice: I Tim. 3:6.

Read in this connection Titus 1:9-14 and Acts 20:28-31.

#### CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

I. *As a Christian:*

- "Abound unto every good work" II Cor. 9:8
- "Fruitful in every good work" Col. 1:10.
- "Prepared unto every good work" II Tim. 1:21.
- "Ready to every good work" Titus. 3:1.
- 1. Husband head of wife: Eph. 5:22.
- 2. Rear in nurture of Lord: Eph. 6:4.
- 3. See Eph. 6:4: Col. 3:21.
- 4. Let each man have his own wife, and each woman have her own husband: I Cor. 7:2.
- 5. Submit to others: Eph. 5:21.
- 6. Be ye also patient: Jas. 5:8.
- 7. Mortify flesh: Col. 3:5.
- 8. Tender-hearted: Eph. 4:32.
- 9. Must grow: II Pet. 3:18.
- 10. Righteous: Rom. 1:17.
- 11. Watch: I Cor. 16:13.

II. *As a Christian.*

1. Able to teach others also: II Tim. 2:2.
2. Not carried away by strange teachings: Heb. 13:9.
3. Be sober: I Thess. 5:8.
4. Must grow: II Pet. 3:18.

III. *As an Example of the Believers:* I Pet. 5:3.

1. Blameless: I Tim. 3:2.
2. No brawler: I Tim. 3:3.
3. Not contentious: I Tim. 3:3.
4. Not soon angry: Titus 1:7.
5. Holy: Titus 1:8.
6. Just: Titus 1:8.
7. Self-controlled: Titus 1:8.
8. Sober-minded: Titus 1:8.
9. Without reproach: I Tim. 3:2.
10. Not a striker: I Tim. 3:3.
11. Given to hospitality: Titus 1:8.
12. Lover of good: Titus 1:8.
13. No lover of money: I Tim. 3:3.
14. Not given to wine: Titus 1:7.

IV. *In General:*

1. He must be willing: I Pet. 5:2.
2. He must not be willing just for the money or prominence: I Pet. 5:2, 3.
3. All these qualifications must first be PROVED in order for one to serve acceptably: I Tim. 3:10.

III. *Let your light shine before men.* Matt. 5:16.

1. Blameless: Phil. 2:15.
2. No brawlers: Titus 3:2.
3. No strife: II Cor. 12:20.
4. Put away anger: Col. 3:8.
6. Holiness of truth: Eph. 4:24.
7. Whatsoever things are just: Phil. 4:8.
8. Adding self-control: II Pet. 1:6.
9. No foolish talking, or jesting: Eph. 5:4.
10. Blameless and harmless: Phil. 2:15.
11. Must not strive: II Tim. 2:24.
12. Given to hospitality: Rom. 12:13.
13. Hold fast the good: I Thess. 5:21.
14. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: I Tim. 6:10.
15. Be not drunken with wine: Eph. 5:18.

IV. *Christian Practice:*

1. Willing to communicate: I Tim. 6:18.
2. Not to be seen of men: Matt. 6:1.
3. Prove your own selves whether ye be in the faith: II Cor. 13:5.

QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS

I. *As Administrators of Financial Affairs:*

1. Honest report: Acts 6:3.
2. Full of Wisdom: Acts 6:3.
3. Not greedy of filthy lucre: I Tim 3:8.

I. *All Christians:*

1. Do that which is honest: II Cor. 13:7.
2. In all Wisdom teaching and: Col. 3:16.
3. Provide things honest in the sight of all men: Rom. 12:17.

II. *Moral Qualities: Examples to Others:*

1. Full of the Holy Spirit: Acts 6:3.
2. Grave: I Tim. 3:8.
3. Not double-tongued: I Tim. 3:8.
4. Not given to much wine: I Tim. 3:8
5. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience: I Tim. 3:9.
6. Blameless: I Tim. 3:10.
7. Husband of one wife: I Tim. 3:12.
8. Rule children and house well: I Tim. 3:12.

II. *All Christians:*

1. The Spirit of God dwelleth in you: I Cor. 3:16.
2. Showing uncorruptness, gravity: Titus 2:7.
3. Speak every man truth with his neighbor: Eph. 4:25.
4. Nor to drink wine: Rom. 14:21.
5. Holding faith, and a good conscience: I Tim. 1:19.
6. Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless: II Pet. 3:14.
7. Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge: Heb. 13:4.
8. Provoke not your children to wrath: Eph. 6:4.

## DEACONESSES

Notwithstanding there is to be found elsewhere in these studies a discussion of that which seems to be a lost art among the churches—the Deaconess—I deem it proper while running the parallels to notice what we have every reason to believe to be her qualification.

Many, of course, will want to hold to the wording of the common or King James' translation which renders I Timothy 3:11, "Even so must their wives."

But having gone into an extensive study of the organization of the New Testament Church and finding that the early church in the days of the apostles did have deaconesses (which is discussed elsewhere) I and many others have been forced to accept the rendering of the American Standard Version which reads as follows: "Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things," as not merely prescribing the behavior of the wife of the deacon, but setting forth the qualifi-

cation of one of the official members of the church—the deaconess.

And the parallel still shows every quality required on the part of the elder, deacon, and deaconess is also required of every Christian in fitting and preparing oneself for eternal life.

#### QUALIFICATION OF DEACONESSES

##### IV. *The Deaconesses:*

1. Grave: I Tim. 3:11.
2. Not slanderers: I Tim. 3:11.
3. Sober, Temperate: I Tim. 3:11.
4. Faithful in all things: I Tim. 3:11.

##### IV. *The Christian:*

1. Uncorruptness, gravity: Titus 2:7.
2. Speak evil of no man: Titus 3:2.
3. Think soberly: Rom. 12:3.  
Temperate: I Cor. 9:25.
4. Be thou faithful unto death: Rev. 2:10.

So it is obvious that the standard set for the elders, deacons, and deaconesses is no higher than that set for every Christian. To speak otherwise would be equivalent to saying that God set forth two standards of living, i.e., one for the elders, etc., and one for the members. And granting that the set for the elders is perfect, the most that may be said for the one set for the members is that it is imperfect. But God has set a perfect standard of living for all his children and requires that we live up to the standard set. And yet, do the best we can, we will fall far short of the standard and must rely upon His mercy and grace to save us. Which grace and mercy will be extended to the individual according to his *RESPONSE* to the privileges within his reach of knowing and doing the will of his Maker.

For God to have set a standard short of perfect would be tantamount to his giving the stamp of approval for us to live an imperfect life which is diametrically opposed to the nature and character of his existence. But seeing that God has given all Christians a perfect standard and from the parallels set forth in this chapter it is evident that what is required of the elders is also required of every member of the church, the question lingers in the minds of many, "Why then did God set forth the qualifi-

cation of the elder?" The answer is this: For the betterment of the whole flock, safeguarding the members against false teaching and guarding the flock against the evil influence of unqualified leaders, God has required that men of the highest development in the church be appointed elders over the flock. And these men are not to be esteemed by the members because they are better than the members, but, "To esteem them exceeding highly in love *for their work's sake*" (I Thessalonians 5:13).

All Christians should be men and women whom "God poured in big moulds and made a perfect pouring. Every one ringing true with no false notes."

God grant that every member may realize his worth as a child of the Heavenly King, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

I believe the position here presented and the use made of the Scriptures employed in magnifying the Christians' standard and raising it aloft so as to eclipse all other standards of living merits a benediction from the *heavenly inspired pen* which is contained in the following quotation: "But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine: that aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded, sound in faith, in love, in patience: that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good; that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed; the younger men likewise exhort to be sober-minded: in all things showing thyself an ensample of good works; in thy doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us. Exhort servants to be in subjection to their own masters, and to be well-pleasing to them in all things; not gainsaying; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of

God our Saviour in all things.

For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works. These things teach and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

"Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work, to speak evil of no man, not to be contentious, to be gentle, showing all meekness toward all men" (Titus 2:1-3:2).

Now to whom do all these splendid characteristics apply?

Being surely included in the development of these high ideals, yet the elder is not one time alluded to by Paul in this wonderful instruction.

But the following are specifically mentioned:

Verse 1. To Titus

Verse 2. The aged men

Verse 3. The aged women

Verse 4. The young women

Verse 6. The young men

Verse 7. To Titus

Verse 9. The servants

Verse 12. Teaching US that, . . . . WE should live, etc.

The apostle's teaching negatively is as follows:

Not false accusers

Not given to much wine

Not answering again

Not purloining

Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts

Speak evil of no man

To be no brawler

But the positive virtues that bring out and develop the really beautiful side of the individual are narrated thus:

Speak sound doctrine, be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience, behavior as becometh holiness, teachers of good things, teach to be sober, to love husbands, to love children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to husbands, to be sober minded, a pattern of good works, in doctrine uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, obedient to masters, please them well in all things, showing all good fidelity, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, live soberly, righteously and godly, be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.

The desired effect of such living is: "*That the Word of God be not blasphemed:*" but that we "*May adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*" (Verses 5, 10).

These qualifications belong alike to all Christians.

E. A. ELAM, *Gospel Advocate*, Feb. 17, 1916

Attention is called to the facts and declarations given above that all may see that in giving the qualifications of elders God is dealing with men of like passions with ourselves, and not with angels. While God's standards are perfect for those for whom they are given, he does not require impossibilities of men. Men, then, by faith and grace, growth and development, become what God requires them to be. The qualifications of elders and the work God has ordained for them to do are adapted to men in the weaknesses and imperfections of the flesh. Hence elders are commanded to "take heed" first to themselves and then the church, are forbidden to lord it over the charge allotted to them and to make the money they receive for service their motive for serving, and are commanded to study the word of God still (Acts 20:28, 32; I Pet. 5:2). Elders make mistakes; against them accusations in the proper spirit and way may be brought, and the ones who do wrong should be entreated and rebuked (I Tim. 5:1, 19, 20).

These declarations and all these provisions for imperfections and mistakes show that elders are human beings and that there is nothing impossible in their qualifications and impractical in their service. On the other hand, it is altogether Scriptural and, therefore, practical to have elders, because God has appointed them to serve in every church, and to question the practicability of his appointments is to impeach his wisdom . . . . Let it be observed that all that which elders are to be are parts of the *Christian character and Christian life*.

From the ones who have been in the church sufficiently long to grow from babes in Christ to full-grown men in Christ, and who have developed these qualifications, the elders are to be appointed. . . . All Christians must exercise self-control, be orderly, be sober-minded, be gentle, be lovers of goodness, be hospitable, etc.; and all Christian parents must govern their own families well and "nurture their children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." The Scriptures do not teach, and Paul does not mean by giving the qualifications of elders, that the ones appointed as elders are the only ones who are to control their children, who are to be temperate, sober, just, holy, etc., and who are not to be brawlers over wine, soon angry, strikers, etc.

In schools, colleges, and universities those who have passed through the courses of study prescribed are the ones who are selected to teach the younger ones and the others in the same schools, colleges, and universities not so well advanced. So in the church, or school of Christ, with the Bible alone as the textbook and standard, those who in any given congregation are most advanced in the Christian graces and Christian life and knowledge of the truth are the ones to teach others. No "novice" or new convert, or babe in Christ, can teach full-grown men and women in Christ or manage the other affairs of the congregation.

Paul declares that "the manifold wisdom of God" is manifested through the church (Ephesians 3:10); hence, we are bound to see his wisdom in the qualifications, appointments, and service of elders, and the appointment of elders in every church.

E. A. ELAM, *Gospel Advocate*, Dec. 26, 1912, pp. 1408-9

I am in complete accord with Brother G. C. Brewer as he expressed his conviction at the close of his chapter, "The Qualifications of an Elder":

Note—Besides these qualifications, every elder should possess natural characteristics of sense, judgment, tact, ability to lead, etc. A man may be in every sense a good man and still not have sufficient force or strength of personality to impress his goodness upon others. If a man "rules well his own house," it is pretty fair evidence that he has some ability to lead and govern.

*The Model Church*, p. 34

It will most certainly be obvious to the reader, from a close study of the parallels, that *blamelessness* in whatever capacity one moves in the true religion of Christ is *that one basic quality* required of him. The Lord set up a standard, for every child of his, which is perfect. Human beings may not completely attain it; but they can attain a status which the Lord accounts as *blame-*

*less.* Yet only as men, not angels, are *blameless*. And to make sure that only those who have attained that state of *blamelessness* be placed over the congregation as elders he pointed out certain activities in which he must be *blameless* and they all relate to character to which all physically and mentally normal people may attain. Then, after this *blamelessness* is acquired or reached only men may be elders with the oversight of the congregation; but both men and women may enter the diaconate.

And if the Lord had failed to specify, in some manner, that *blameless* persons be appointed elders, just try to imagine what would happen.

May, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

Numbers 6:24-26

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### ATTITUDE

*Not what we wish, but what we want,  
O let Thy grace supply:  
The good, unasked, in mercy grant,  
The ill, though asked, deny.*

—Selected

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LASCIVIOUSNESS

MR. THOS. C. WHITFIELD  
Nashville, Tennessee

*Dear Brother Whitfield:*

Some years past I prepared a series of ten articles on "The Eldership" which appeared on the pages of the *Firm Foundation*, and later in pamphlet form which supply was soon exhausted.

The demand is great enough to warrant a new edition; but having restricted my writing at that time I have chosen and set my hand to a more thorough study of the caption and some fifteen or more chapters have already been prepared.

And since the entire subject, covering a study of Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses, and members, is a study of which character has to do, it is imperative that the most effective instruction be given for the greatest development of that quality which will make each individual most useful in the vineyard of his Master.

To this end I have, along with the other matter, prepared a dictionary of the terms used in the New Testament describing the outstanding works of the flesh together with those entering into the qualification of elders and deacons.

According to my study of the word "Lascivious" and from your lesson to the Charlotte Avenue Church Training School on Thursday night, March 4, I gather that this is about the most inclusive of all sins, covering a wide range of practices of not only worldlings but members of the church as well, and works itself right on into the ministry and the governing body of the purchased possession of the blood of Christ in its most poisonous and insidious fashion.

Therefore I am earnestly requesting of you, that your study

of the word be formed into an instructive article to appear along with the other chapters of the prospectus referred to above. And may the Lord bless you with the needed courage in writing plainly in the most understandable language, at your command, that love for God, Christ, and righteousness might woo many from those practices included in the term "lascivious" or "lasciviousness."

Fraternally,

HERBERT E. WINKLER

THOS. C. WHITFIELD  
RESPONDED AS FOLLOWS:

**T**HREE is a continuous struggle going on within every Christian. Our fleshly members, with their passions and desires, are warring against the spirit. When we would do good, evil is present with us. "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practice" (Romans 7:18, 19).

The Christian must be on guard against all sins which grow out of the lusts of the flesh. Some of these sins, however, are more subtle than the others and are therefore more dangerous. This is especially true with regard to the sin of lasciviousness. The word is found nine times in the Revised Version of the New Testament as follows:

Mark 7:20-23, "And he said, That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of man, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man."

II Corinthians 12:21, ". . . lest again when I come and God should humble me before you, and I should mourn for many

of them that have sinned heretofore, and repented not of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they committed."

Galatians 5:19, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, . . ."

Ephesians 4:19, ". . . who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."

I Peter 4:3, "For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, reveling, carousings, and abominable idolatries."

II Peter 2:2, 7, 18, "And many shall follow their lascivious doings, by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of . . . . and delivered righteous Lot, distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked. . . . For, uttering great swelling words of vanity, they entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping from them that live in error."

Jude 4, "For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."

The Greek word *aselia* is found in its plural form also in Romans 13:13 where it is translated "wantonness" as follows: "Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in reveling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy."

#### LASCIVIOUSNESS DEFINED

Let us immediately face the problem of defining this word which is translated seven times in the New Testament as a noun and two times as an adjective. The word is not easily defined in its more delicate details, yet a working definition is possible. Lasciviousness is a sin which is condemned in no uncertain terms in God's word. It is our responsibility to try to determine what it is so that we may avoid practicing it. The average dictionary

defines lasciviousness by using such terms as lewd, lustful, wanton, licentious, etc. It is obvious that such words must themselves be defined, but their meanings are also obscured by the very nature of the sins described. In discussing several sins propriety demands that we speak in somewhat veiled terms, yet the salvation of souls demands that we be plain enough so that everyone will understand.

First, I should like to give you some definitions taken from various sources:

In the *Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, edited by Fallows, we find: "Lasciviousness (Gr. *aselgia*, that which excites disgust), unbridled lust, licentiousness, wantonness. It includes everything tending to promote or fulfill fleshly lusts; and to give over ones self to it is to delight in, without shame or remorse. . . ."

A fuller definition is given in *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. III, edited by James Hastings: "The meaning is absence of restraint, indecency; and although that is generally regarded as shown in sensuality, there are passages, as Mark 7:22 and I Peter 4:3, where sensuality is not yet in sight. In the latter passage, as Salmond points out, the writer begins with a general term ('excesses') sufficient to include unbridled conduct of all kinds, and then passes to particulars. Trench thinks 'wantonness' the best rendering, 'standing as it does in a remarkable ethical connexion with *aselgia*, and having the same duplicity of meaning,' i.e., indecency in general and sensuality in particular. . . . The leading idea in the word is probably conduct that is shameless. . . . *aselgia* uncleanness that shocks public decency."

*Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, edited by James Hastings. "We may then conclude that the prominent idea in *asclgia* in the New Testament is flagrant, shameless sensuality. . . . In the heathen world 'sexual vice was no longer counted vice. It was provided for by public law; it was incorporated into the worship of the gods. It was cultivated in every luxurious and monstrous excess. It was eating out the manhood of the Greek and Latin races. From the imperial Caesar down to the horde of slaves, it

seemed as though every class of society had abandoned itself to the horrid practices of lust."

*The International Critical Commentary*, "The Epistle to the Galatians," by Burton says, "*aselgia* . . . is, indeed, unrestrained, but not necessarily public. . . ."

Finally, Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon* gives, "*aselgia* . . . unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence: Mark 7:22 (where it is uncertain what particular vice is spoken of); of gluttony and venery, Jude 4; of carnality, lasciviousness: II Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; II Peter 2:7; plur. 'wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc.' (Fritzsche), Romans 13:13."

Lasciviousness is a sin of the heart. It has to do with the passions and desires of the flesh. Probably unbridled or unrestrained conduct of all kinds which would excite disgust should be labeled lasciviousness. Certainly the term applies in a particular way to sexual desires, but, it must not be overlooked, that not all of these desires are sinful. Some in the past have made the mistake of counting all fleshly desires as being sinful. There is no sin in the desire as such, as is inferred in 1 Corinthians 7:1-10 and especially in verse 9. The sin is in having unlawful sexual desires, or desires which cannot be rightfully fulfilled.

But is every fleshly desire lasciviousness even though it cannot be rightfully fulfilled? The answer is that lasciviousness includes the idea of willing or unrestrained desire. The sin is not in the unlawful desire as such but rather in the heart that gives over to the passion; delighting in it, having pleasure in it, even encouraging it, and practicing it without any shame or feeling of remorse.

The sin is closely connected with fornication because it inevitably leads to the physical act if the opportunity should be presented. Some might kid themselves into thinking they would restrain the act even though they do not restrain the desire. The Lord knows better for he counts the person with the un-

bridled desire as having already committed the act. Hear Him in Matthew 5:28, ". . . but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

It is true that the idea of shamelessness and the shocking of public decency might be in the word, but not necessarily so. Some might get the idea that to keep their passions hid and to enjoy the desires secretly might free them from the sin. It might be well here to remember the definition given by Burton, "*aseligia* is, indeed, unrestrained, but not necessarily public. . . ." The sin is there if it is an unrestrained unlawful desire, whether anyone but the person involved knows about it or not.

There is another important idea in the word lasciviousness: Desires that are in themselves right and lawful may become lascivious if they are indulged to excess. This does not mean that we are to restrain our lawful desires to the point of not enjoying them, nor should we be ashamed of them in the proper conditions and relationships. God has made provision for the fulfillment of such through the holy institution of marriage. The only restraint demanded in this relationship is that which the general law of self-control demands. Desires which are in themselves lawful, if they are unbridled and indulged to the point that they become the dominant influence in life, overruling common decency, and warping the Christian personality, would be classed as lasciviousness. Thus we see that there are two ways in which desires must be restrained. Unlawful desires must be restrained to the point of not giving over to them. Lawful desires must be bridled or kept within the control of the person and within the bounds of common decency. If desires are unrestrained in either of these ways, the sin of lasciviousness is committed.

Just here let us notice the difference between temptation and sin. Just because a person is tempted does not necessarily mean that he has committed sin. One may have to put up a tremendous fight but he does not have to be overcome. He may struggle hard and wrestle long yet come out victorious. But let us take

murder as an example to illustrate the point. In I John 3:15 we read, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." This Scripture is analogous to Matthew 5:28 which we read a moment ago. "But I say unto you, that everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Both of these Scriptures show that there is a sin of the heart which is condemned as quickly as the physical act. But when is this heart sin committed? Certainly not when we are tempted, but when we give our hearts over to the desire.

Suppose some man should do one serious hurt, perhaps by mistreating some of his loved ones. Now it is entirely possible that there might arise in his heart the desire to destroy the man. He would be tempted to indulge the desire. In wrestling with the temptation he might say to himself, "I must not, I will not have such thought. I am pained by this sinful desire and I will not give way to it." If he persists in this attitude, he has been tempted but has not sinned. On the other hand if he should take pleasure in the urge to kill, and make no effort to restrain it, but should give his heart over to the thought, he would have in reality murdered the man in his heart. This same principle is true with regard to Matthew 5:28. One may be tempted, but he has not committed the sin of lasciviousness until he gives over his heart to the evil desire.

#### SOME SCRIPTURAL MANIFESTATIONS

Now let us turn to a Scriptural reference concerning a people steeped in lasciviousness. In Ephesians 4:17-19, we read, "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." In this personification of lasciviousness, Paul represents the Gentiles as having given themselves over to her jurisdiction.

In commenting on the last phrase, "to work all uncleanness with greediness," Adam Clarke says, "This is a complete finish of the most abandoned character; to do an unclean act is bad, to labour in it is worse, to labour in all uncleanness is worse still; but to do all this in every case to the utmost extent . . . with a desire exceeding time, place, opportunity, and strength, is worst of all, and leaves nothing more profligate or more abandoned to be described or imagined; just as Ovid paints the drunken Silenus, whose wantonness survives his strength and keeps alive his desires, though old age has destroyed the power of gratification: 'Thee also, O Silenus, of inextinguishable lust, they inflame; Thou art old in every thing except lust.'" Just here let us observe that young unmarried people are not the only ones who are troubled with this sin. Those who are old in everything except their lust are in just as much danger of hell fire as those who are young and more spirited.

Paul's description of the Gentiles is somewhat similar in Romans 1:24-27: "Wherefore God gave them up in the lust of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dis-honored among themselves: for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due."

It is the same story over and over where people give themselves up to their passions and desires. Lasciviousness must inevitably lead to the loathsome conditions just described if it is practiced by a people. At the time Paul wrote, this was one of the abominable sins of the whole heathen world. Some, such as the Nicolaitans, actually tried to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, according to Jude 4, which means that they tried to claim the liberty which is in Christ as a license to practice

immorality.

In commenting on Galatians 5:19, G. G. Findlay in the *Expositor's Bible*, gives this description of the Gentile world during Paul's day: "The works of the flesh are these—fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness." A dark beginning! Sins of impurity find a place in every picture of Gentile morals given by the Apostles. In whatever direction he writes—to Romans or Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, or Thessalonians—it is always necessary to warn against these evils. They are equally 'manifest' in heathen literature. The extent to which they stain the pages of the Greek and Roman classics sets a heavy discount against their value as instruments of Christian education. Civilized society in Paul's day was steeped in sexual corruption."

"Fornication was practically universal. Few were found, even among severe moralists, to condemn it. The overthrow of the splendid classical civilization, due to the extinction of manly virtues in the dominant race, may be traced largely to this cause. Brave men are the sons of pure women. John in the apocalypse has written on the brow of Rome, 'the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth,' this legend: 'Babylon the Great, mother of harlots' (Revelation 17:5). Whatever symbolic meaning the saying has, in its literal sense it was terribly true. Our modern Babylons, unless they purge themselves, may earn the same title and the same doom." It seems that the final warning in this quotation, written some forty-five years ago, is particularly in order at this time.

#### THINGS WHICH LEAD TO LASCIVIOUSNESS

But now let us notice the Greek word *aselgia* as an adjective. It is so translated in II Peter 2:2, "And many shall follow their lascivious doings"; and also in verse 7, "and delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked. ...." Not only is the unlawful unrestrained desire sinful, but the thing causing such desire is lascivious. It is precisely at this point that the modern dance is condemned. Let us notice again Fallow's definition, "It includes everything tending to promote or fulfill

fleshly lusts; . . . ." Also Thayer's quotation from Fritzsche, "wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc." The modern dance is not wrong solely because it might lead one to the physical act of fornication, but it is sinful to the degree that it arouses unrestrained desires that cannot be fulfilled under present relations and conditions. When such desires are aroused, the dance is within itself sinful because it is then a lascivious act.

"Promiscuous petting" is even worse than dancing because it is usually practiced when the couple is alone and not restrained by the presence of others. If carried to the point of arousing lustful passion it becomes a lascivious act and is condemned along with the physical act of immorality. One might as well try to put out a burning building while pouring gasoline on the blaze, as to try to keep down lasciviousness while engaging in "petting" and the modern dance.

The same may be said of lewd pictures of every sort, whether still or moving. There are certain movies today that display sex in such a way as to make it extremely difficult to prevent undesirable thoughts from entering the mind. When such pictures arouse unrestrained immoral desires they are lascivious and therefore are condemned as sinful.

Filthy conversation, smutty jokes, and suggestive stories (whether in mixed groups or among individuals of the same sex) are other things which lead to lasciviousness. To that extent they are lascivious acts and are sinful. There are many pious souls who would throw up their hands in holy horror at the suggestion that they would commit acts of fornication and adultery, yet who are themselves guilty of participating in such filthy conversation. Sometimes they are supposed preachers of the Gospel!

And what shall we say about the lascivious books of the present generation? I have actually known people who would condemn movies of all kinds and yet would themselves not miss reading a single modern best seller.

But it is not my purpose to catalog all of the things which

might lead to lasciviousness. These things are merely suggestive of a host of others that might be mentioned. It should also be pointed out that these physical conditions are not necessary to arouse sensual passions. Just because a person condemns such things as sensual movies, filthy conversations, and petting does not mean that they will be free of the sin of lasciviousness. The human mind has the power to call up mental images to suit its fancy. These mental images can stir a person to flagrant, shameless, and lustful passions.

### HOW TO PREVENT LASCIVIOUSNESS

The same general cures which might be given for all the works of the flesh are applicable to this special sin. The thing most needed is understanding and a desire to be pure. It seems that we should face our sex problems realistically.

We have failed to teach our young people about sex and they have in many instances learned about such things under conditions that have not been conducive to high thinking. Perhaps the home is the place where this teaching should be done. Parents should teach their young people that sex is not something filthy as such. The sex urge is one of our God given characteristics and in its proper fulfillment is not something ugly and obscene. Young people should be taught about this drive and should understand that its proper fulfillment is to be realized in marriage only.

Another way to prevent lasciviousness is to avoid situations which excite lustful desires. Paul exhorted Timothy, "But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (II Timothy 2:22). It is true that we should strive to exercise self-control so as not to commit the sin of lasciviousness even if we are living in a lascivious world. However, there are times when the best way to overcome sin is to flee the temptation.

The general rule stated by Paul in Romans 12:21 is also applicable here. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." We should apply this rule by thinking good thoughts. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things

are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). Proverbs 4:23 teaches us that we can control our thoughts, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

We have no way of knowing just how prevalent the sin of lasciviousness is. The outward manifestations of it in the acts of fornication and adultery are so common that we know it is widespread. We must not overlook the fact that back of every act of fornication there is the sin of lasciviousness. *[So the sin of lasciviousness is a leader.—H. E. Winkler.]* How many times the heart sin is committed, and by whom, we will never know in this life. However, on the great and memorable Day of the Lord even the secret sins of the heart will be made known. We remember too the sobering thought expressed in Hebrews 4:13, "And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

May God help us all to live clean, holy, and pure lives so that finally, having overcome the passions and desires of the flesh, we may receive the crown that fadeth not away.

THOS. C. WHITFIELD

#### COMMENDATION

I think it surely must be obvious to all the thoughtful readers that this book has in every respect dealt with a position in life and in the church where character is a most necessary prerequisite to one's properly functioning therein.

Our foremost aim has been to arrest the minds of those who aspire to the Eldership in the Church of our Lord, that their minds might be lifted from a low plane of thinking and their feet placed upon higher ground and become "a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Timothy 2:21); that all may see that the elder-

ship in the divine institution is for those who, by knowing and living the life lived before us by our Master, have attained to that degree of righteousness which is pleasing to the Lord and is "humble and of a contrite heart, who trembles at the word of the Lord" and is fearful of the responsibility of watching over the souls of men as they who must give account to God and yet through a sense of their obligation to do the work for which they are prepared might accept the eldership in the church when the need is urgent.

And helping one to prepare for this work all will agree that Brother Whitfield has done a good job.

He faced the task bravely and wrote plainly and laid the charge of guilt at the feet of not only the young and spirited; but before the old, as well, who are able to call back to mind the practices of early life and revel their hearts in the lustful passions and in their hearts live in lascivious meditations of days forever past.

So, obviously, Brother Whitfield's article merits a favored place in this book, for which the author thanks him and bids him "God Speed," in his every work of faith and labor of love in the Lord.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

"He who thinks of crime, is in danger of committing it."—*Selected*

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,  
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;  
    But seen too often face to face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

—Author unknown

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## A SIMPLE, PRACTICAL, BUSINESS PLAN

By J. E. ACUFF

The Simplicity that is in Christ (II Corinthians 11:3) exemplified in the Life and Ministry of our Lord, and in the requirements of the Gospel, are likewise present in the worship we render under the New Covenant and in the Plan revealed in the New Testament for carrying forward the work of the Church. Many have sought to clothe the Eldership in mystery. A disposition to reject the simplicity of Christ and to seek for the complex and enigmatical has perhaps been more in evidence in connection with our studies of church government than of any other part of our relationship to God through Christ.

You have probably heard one preaching brother ask another, "What is *your* position on the Eldership?" And the question was so put as to indicate that the other preacher could improve his prestige and reputation by announcing some individual conception or theory as yet undiscovered by anyone else. We can study with more profit if we reverse the procedure too often employed of looking upon a discussion of the Eldership as an opportunity to display our wisdom in an explanation of difficult and complex and instead seek to learn the simple Truth of God.

To be sure, as is true of God's revelation concerning all things pertaining to our welfare, we can expect to find "some things hard to be understood"; but it is likewise true that the instructions given regarding the oversight of the work of the Church are stated in plain, understandable language which shows the plan to be simple and practical as well as Spiritual in its nature.

Giant business corporations have, within recent decades, in

the improvement of their organizations, adopted to an extent the principles taught nearly two thousand years ago by the Holy Spirit concerning the selection and appointment of Elders and the relationship they sustain toward other members. These companies prepare a series of job descriptions setting forth the requirements of each position and the nature of the work to be done. Then they list the traits, qualifications or characteristics and abilities which the individual must be known to possess before being placed in these positions. Then in some sort of recruiting program by aptitude tests and other similar methods they proceed to search out, find and install persons capable of performing the duties to which they are assigned. When qualified applicants are not available some of them institute extensive training programs and they lay great stress on co-ordination and co-operation.

The Church has been assigned a task of greater magnitude than any business corporation or all of them combined. The work will not be finished, the saturation point will not be reached so long as there is a single lost soul living anywhere on the globe. The work is to be done by the members of the Church in the light of the New Testament under the leadership of designated Elders or Shepherds and is to continue until the Chief Shepherd shall appear.

Much of the teaching of the Holy Spirit regarding Elders can be classified under four divisions:

- (1) Job description; duties to be performed; work to be done; results to be accomplished (Titus 1:11; Acts 11:30; Acts 15:2-29; Acts 16:4; Acts 20:17-35; Acts 21:18; I Timothy 5:17; I Peter 5:1-4; James 5:14; I Timothy 3:1; Hebrews 13:17).
- (2) What kind of men may serve as Elders? (Titus 1:6-9; I Timothy 3:2-7).
- (3) Their selection, appointment, or installation? (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).
- (4) The relation between and the co-operation upon the part

of Elders and other members of the Church (I Peter 5:5; I Thessalonians 5:12, 13; Hebrews 13:7; Hebrews 13:17; I Timothy 5:17).

Some Scripture references are listed under each head for the convenience of the reader. A discussion of each of these subdivisions is not in place here. The chief purpose of this brief article is to stress the simple and practical nature of the Divine Plan of Church Government in the hope that we may be able to make a common sense application of the New Testament teaching and not veer away from the simplicity of it for the mere sake of argument or disputation.

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#### SUNDAY NIGHT

*I love the church that Jesus bought  
And I know that it is right;  
I go there on Sunday morning,  
But not on Sunday night.*

*I love to hear the gospel, too,  
It gives me pure delight,  
I hear it Sunday morning,  
But not on Sunday night.*

*God bless our preacher, too,  
And give him power and might,  
But put the sinner in his place,  
I won't be there Sunday night.*

*I know I need more strength  
To keep me in the fight,  
For help I come on Sunday morn  
But not on Sunday night.*

—“Our Scrapbook of Poetry”  
by Kathryn Smith

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“MEN OUGHT TO BEHAVE THEMSELVES”

By E. G. CREACY

THESE things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Timothy 3:14, 15).

Much of the New Testament was written to teach Christians, members of the church, how to behave themselves in the church; or in other words, how to live and to do their part in the work outlined by Christ. Compromising with sin and error is destructive of the church. Sin and false teaching in the church is more dangerous than sin and false teaching out of the church. Softness toward these things is vitiating to the cause of Christ and should be blasted out, and the kind of preaching (and teaching) authorized by the Lord Jesus Christ will do the work. We should know what the will of God is, and stand uncompromisingly for the truth, and at the same time stand against every thing else. Of course, this is not always popular with men, but it is popular with God.

The New Testament abounds with teaching concerning the church. The better informed we are, the better prepared we are to be the kind of members we should be. We must divorce our minds of the denominational idea of things divinely appointed in order to have the right conception of, and the proper regard for, the church. The church is not just another church—it is undenominational and nondenominational. As a divine, blood-bought institution, it ranks above human institutions. The Lord

is the founder of the church; men are the founders of denominations. So it is imperative that we learn how to behave ourselves in the church. We shall deal with some of the problems that have to do with the organization and operation of the church.

The word "church" is used in at least two senses in the New Testament. It is used in a general sense, including the saved. There are no saved people out of the church, for the Lord adds "to the church such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). People do not "join" the church of Christ. Sometimes I am asked why I belong to the church of Christ, and my answer is, "because I cannot help it!" When one is saved from his alien sins, is born again, obeys the gospel, he automatically becomes a member of the church of Christ which is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22, 23).

When we have in mind the church in its universal sense, we can truly say that we are members of the church wherever we may be.

Then, we have the word "church" used in the New Testament in a local, or congregational sense. The "organization" of the New Testament church is simple, yet it is profound. It consists of members, and when material is available, elders and deacons should be appointed (Acts 14:23; and Titus 1:5). [The church which has no elders and deacons has no organization.—H.E.W.]

A church with elders that "rule well," and deacons that serve, and members that work is a "paradise" on earth. However, we should not be too hasty about "appointing" elders, for if the right men are not selected, the cause will suffer, and how often have I seen the church wrecked and ruined on account of unqualified men being put in as elders. Thus a scriptural congregation consists of members, each of whom faithfully performs his part; it is a body of the "called out" united for some end or work, striving together to glorify God and save souls. The Bible says: "Where there is no vision the people perish." Hence, the church should labor in word and doctrine, and ever be militant in all her pursuits according to righteousness. It should be remembered that no congregation can rise above its leadership, and

how badly a qualified leadership is needed in so many of the congregations. Where the leadership is weak, the church is weak.

Another cardinal principle of the New Testament doctrine is the autonomy of the church. Each congregation is an independent body, should direct her own affairs (being careful of course to abide within the realm of New Testament principles), and not rely upon others for support and protection. Two or more churches are not "tied" together in a kind of conference, synod, or association.

God's plan is always right. The autonomy of the church saves it from disaster if a "sister" church should go wrong. Churches, as well as individuals, go wrong sometimes. The autonomy of the church does not mean that two or more congregations may not co-operate in a scriptural work. They should. But when a plurality of churches are "organized" into a kind of district-union, which inevitably creates some one to direct affairs, we have an organization larger than a local church. We may not admit it, but it is there just the same. So we should not forget that any organization larger than a local church is too big, and any organization smaller than a local church is too little. A local church of Christ is the only organization recognized by the God of heaven. The church is also suffering today on account of some "one man" promoters of missionary and kindred endeavors. Churches should not allow these self-appointed agents to fleece them and dictate to them. It is wholly incompatible with the spirit and teaching of the New Testament. Some time ago one of these one-man-society promoters became very angry because the elders of a certain congregation did not allow him to dictate to the church just what and how it should do!

Every Christian should be amenable to a church, that is, he should be a "member" of a congregation of Christians, and thus be under the careful watch-care and protection of the church through her elders, and never shirk in doing his full duty in the work of said church. We should not argue that we are members wherever we go, and not attend regularly and work at any place—just "scout about" here and there, and be a sort of "free-

lance" Christians! All things else being equal, we should be regular in attendance with the church to which we are amenable. We should not feel that we are not responsible for anybody or any thing.

Another practice which is all too common: A member becomes offended and strolls off to another congregation. Nothing is said or done about it, only he is recognized and fellowshiped as a "faithful" member! When such a one comes into your midst he should be rebuked and exhorted to go back to his "home church" and adjust matters, and then if he wishes to affiliate with you, he can come with a clean slate. Disorderly members, when they cannot have their way, or, after they have caused division, sneak off and attend at some other congregation, and sometimes are received and even used in the public work and service of the church. When such is done, that congregation is guilty of the sin of harboring rebellion, and automatically puts herself out of the fellowship of all true churches. It seems that some are so anxious for numbers that they will receive anything with open arms and thus become a dumping ground for every thing that comes along. Any one who aspires to be a leader in God's church, and becomes a party to such practice, is unfit to serve in any way until he genuinely repents and proves himself to be worthy of the gospel of Christ. Of course, I know I am dealing with delicate matters, and what I am saying will not be received by those who are guilty of such a heinous sin, but must I be driven from speaking the truth by the lash of sentiment on the part of factional and rebellious members? I don't aim to!

The leadership of a church should realize their great responsibility, and safeguard the congregation from false teachers, hobby riders, and impostors. When unfaithful and unsound men "creep in" they sow the seeds of discord. Before a preacher is used, the church should *know* that he is *safe* in his teaching and as far as it is possible be assured that he is clean in life. Unfortunately, there are some who claim to be of the church of Christ, but are hobby riders, and wherever they go the cause suffers as a result.

When members remove to a new community to reside, they should find the church immediately and definitely take their stand with it. Elders should admonish departing members along such lines, and it would be well to notify the church in the vicinity of these members to look after them, and thus encourage them to be faithful. Many have been lost to the church on account of neglect along this line. I have labored much in some of the northern cities, and I have knowledge that there are hundreds who were fairly good members down in Kentucky and Tennessee, but when they moved to the city did not locate the church and line up with it. They have grown cold and become indifferent.

The church should operate along sane and safe lines. The Bible says, "*Cursed be he that doeth the work of Jehovah negligently.*" Should we not tremble at such a divine pronouncement?

Yes, the church is a sacred institution. And the work and operation of the church deserves the *best* that is in us. Space forbids a fuller discussion of these vital problems confronting the church, but my ardent hope is that these suggestions will instill within us a greater interest in the church and a burning desire to "Behave ourselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

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### THE HOLY ONE

*For David saith concerning him,  
I beheld the Lord always before my face;  
For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:  
Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;  
Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope:  
Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades,  
Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.  
Thou madest known unto me the ways of life;  
Thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance.*

—Acts 2:25-28

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LEANING OF THE MIND

**A** CLEAR understanding of any problem based upon the proper teaching and information thereof leads one into the proper appreciation of the pros and cons and enables him to rise above the thought of bias or prejudice and with the correct mental equilibrium weigh the evidence on either side and thus come to a fair and equitable decision. He is unbiased or impartial.

The author is not prejudiced against the doctrine: "Therefore being justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort." He rejects it because it is not according to the Sacred writings. Neither is he biased toward the doctrine that a child of God cannot apostatize and be lost. He grants that if it were true, thousands of God's children would be on the winning side and that he himself would view the future with absolute certainty. He rejects the doctrine because he knows it is untrue. Nor is he prejudiced toward Catholicism, of Roman flavor; but he rejects it because he knows it is a corrupt and sinful system.

Some seem to have thought me to be prejudiced against the teaching that an elder *must absolutely be a married man*. I can say with confidence that I am not biased here. I have studied every writing that has come to my notice and have fairly weighed every argument on that side that has been brought to my attention with fairness and candor.

Elsewhere in this book I clearly state my reasons for denying that to be the thought the Holy Spirit had in mind when he guided the peerless apostle to write "The husband of one wife." I have not taken this position to be different; nor to pick a row with the dissenter. I have stated in the discussion of it what I

think to be an underlying principle, that is too often overlooked by the *absolutist*. And in dealing with such a momentous subject my conscience drives me to what I believe to be a full discussion of the problem; although I will be subjected to severe criticism. However, this I covet, that I might, at least, be given the fair consideration for honesty and conviction which I accord to those who reject the position held by me.

I feel that it would be unfair to my opponents not to let them be heard along with myself. I, therefore, quote from some able writers and from their most positive expressions favoring the position that "the husband of one wife," absolutely requires the elder to be a married man.

A few paragraphs are taken from the writings of my friend and brother, A. L. Deveny in his book, *The Church And Its Elders*:

To be prepared to serve a congregation which is composed of the children of God, as an elder, a man must first know the meaning of fatherhood. This he can not grasp without actual experience. Adopting a child or children does not suffice. They must be his own flesh and blood. Children are born into his family; are loved, nurtured, trained, shielded, protected and encouraged by the father and mother until they are ready to assume the burdens of life themselves. The children are taught to love one another; to honor and respect, love and obey their parents, to love God and to respect and obey both civil and divine authority. Children are born into God's family upon the earth. God loves and cares for his children, and has provided that they shall be nurtured, trained, shielded, protected and encouraged during the formative period of their spiritual lives (which period is spent in the church) by certain selected men whom he has chosen to designate elders. God has provided that each congregation shall be under the care and guidance of a plurality of these good men.

Happy is the elder whose wife can listen while he thinks out loud and never repeat anything that she hears him say, especially if what he confides to her is related in any way to the work of the elderhood.

From the above consideration it is not difficult to see why God has stipulated marriage to one woman, fatherhood to two or more children (c) by her, and the wise exercise of authority in his family, as among the prerequisites to a man's being of use as a shepherd of his spiritual family on the earth. A man may have been married at one time, children being born into his family and trained in the ways of the Lord, then his wife die. The fact that he chooses not to marry again does not in itself disqualify him

to serve as an elder. If anything, his sad experiences would enable him to serve in that capacity much more sympathetically and understandingly than before. pp. 52-54

18. May a bachelor serve a church as elder? *Ans.* Positively, no.
19. May a married man who has no children of his own flesh and blood serve as an elder divinely appointed? *Ans.* He may not. p. 187

24. Was the apostle Paul an elder? *Ans.* The evidence is to the contrary. Paul himself said that a bishop must rule his own house well; he must have faithful children; he must be the husband of one wife; children not accused of riot or unruly. No, Paul lacked several of the qualifications which the Holy Spirit laid down through him for an elder. The Bible student cannot find one statement in the New Testament which teaches that Paul was an elder. p. 183

(c) p. 53. In considering the qualities which form the composite character which the Holy Spirit declares is fit material for the elderhood, is the fact of fatherhood the thing to be stressed regardless of the number of children in his family? Or, is it imperative that there should be more than one child; or, again, as some claim, must there be more than two children? The Greek word which is rendered "children" in both I Timothy 3:4 and Titus 1:6 is not in the dual number which means "two," *but in the plural number which means more than two.*" *Ibid*, p. 228

The author feels that he has quite well answered the arguments in the above quotations regarding the necessity of elders being married and having children and Paul's being an elder, elsewhere in this book. But inasmuch as I have not noticed the number of the Greek term for "children" in English I wish to notice it here. The above quotation states "The Greek word which is rendered "children" in both I Timothy 3:4 and Titus 1:6 is not in the dual number which means "two," *but in the plural number which means more than two.*"

I show under chapter heading "Plurality—Another Error," that the New Testament was written in the Hellenistic or Koinee (common) Greek and that in their usage the dual number had disappeared entirely; leaving only the singular and plural numbers, agreeing to our English usage.

But for argument's sake, let's grant that the Greek of the New Testament retained and used the dual number and see what happens.

The singular is used with reference to the wife and therefore

the elder (and so with the rest of us) is limited to "one wife." And so if the Greek for children had been in the singular the elder would not be allowed to have more than one child.

And had it been in the dual number the elder would be required to have two, and only two, children. Either of these cases would place a limit upon the children of all elders, or any of the rest of us could rear. But as the word for children is in the plural number, it simply shows there is no restriction placed upon the number of children any family may have.

Now, suppose the Greek word for wife was in the plural number. Would that require a man to have a plurality of wives or should one only understand that there was no restriction upon how many he could have and that he could have as many as he chose whether one or a hundred, or none?

I am confident that the only significance that attaches to the plural with regard to children in any case is that there is no restriction as to the number and that in all cases one child or many children meet with all requirements.

NOTE.—The Classic Greek used the singular, the dual, and the plural numbers which met with complications, especially in making translations. So the New Testament, to meet the needs of all people, the common as well as the upper classes, was written in *Koinee* (common) Greek which facilitates our understanding of the Sacred Oracles.

#### "AT THE TIME OF HIS APPOINTMENT"

One brother writes that "the husband of one wife" means that the elder must have just one living wife at a time. He states that a man who has two living wives is living in adultery and cannot be an elder in the Church of Christ. Then he says that the statement implies that a man must be married at the time of his appointment to the eldership. Then he further states that we should remember that Paul is giving the qualifications of the elder at the time he is appointed to the eldership and not what may take place in his life after he is appointed. Then he reasons that, after a man is appointed to the eldership, if his wife should

die has nothing to do with the qualifications of his appointment. He states that this fact is much overlooked in discussing the qualifications of an elder at the time of his appointment.

The position incurs difficulties.

The brother holds to the idea that "the husband of one wife" is a positive requirement for the elder to be married and not that it is a restrictive or prohibitive clause. Paul is stating (this brother says) the qualifications of an elder at the time of his appointment to the eldership and not what may take place in the life of an elder after his appointment. By this he says (whether he intended to or not) that the qualifications, in the plural if you please, must be so and so at the time of the appointment without reference to what may take place in the life of an elder after his appointment.

I wonder if by his use of the plural he would allow his logic to be carried to its legitimate conclusion? It would amount to this: A man at the time of his appointment must be "not given to wine," but after his appointment he might take up drinking without impairing his standing before the Lord. Would that disqualify him? The brother stated that Paul is stating the qualifications (this plural means something besides the husband of one wife) of an elder at the time of his appointment to the eldership and not what may take place in the life of an elder after his appointment. So, if he is correct in this, the qualification may be ignored after his appointment as in the mention of wine above and what applies to the wine after his appointment as in the mention of wine above and what applies to the wine will apply to every other point mentioned.

I believe that if "the husband of one wife" means a man **MUST** have a wife at the time of the appointment, it also, means he **MUST** have a wife during his entire tenure as an elder, just as may be said of the other qualities, and that being true, then the church at Old Hebron near Russellville, Kentucky, was justified in deposing one of her elders, old Brother John Lyons, when his wife died.

Holding to the idea of the positive requirement that a man

must have a wife at the time of his appointment and then having to make some explanation regarding the decease of his wife almost puts the exegete into a quagmire.

Any position that, by human reasoning, may be reduced to an absurdity is not only unscriptural but untenable.

And in all my experience with men who state that "the husband of one wife" is a positive requirement for the elder to be married I cannot now recall one who would not involve himself in some difficulty just as this brother has done.

I have no reason in the world for holding to my present position on, "the husband of one wife," other than it is my firm conviction that it is only restrictive in its setting.

Another quotation on the positive argument:

The husband of one wife [Brother Wilson says] has been interpreted in a number of ways. It is always safe to appoint men who have one and only one wife, provided of course they possess the other qualifications in a fair degree. "one that rules well his own house" signifies a man whose family is faithful to the Lord and his church. Paul very appropriately adds, "If a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" Without clearer testimony we should not suppose that a man's children must all be old enough to obey the gospel before he can qualify for an elder. But certainly they should be obedient and well-behaved children.—L. R. WILSON

Another able man writes:

The husbandry of souls is the bishop's duty. For it he must be prepared. Growing trees, propagating fowls, and raising animals will not qualify one for supervising the church. One must actually be the husband of a living, thinking, talking, choosing, requesting, determining woman who is sometimes well, reasonable, and happy to school himself for the duties as a bishop of the church. That essential wisdom can be acquired in no other relation.

The bachelor can never fully understand people. He has no adequate background from which he can see clearly the problems of life. There are great recesses in his own being into which he has never gone. He has never grappled with the formidable forces of the flesh to stay a cherished home tottering in a verbal storm. He has never looked in bewilderment across the insidious little brook at his halting feet to the dismal desert of divorce beyond. He has never been terrified by the merciless realization that in the deplorable event either he or his mate took that one fatal step that which he feared would be upon him. The single man has never

apprehended the fact that his happiness was suspended by the fantastic caprice of another.

The husband is overwhelmed and bewildered by the marvels of life. He is astounded by the mystery of death. He sees human life unadorned. He can with compassion shepherd his fellow. He can advise men. He can admonish women. He can counsel youth. By being the husband of one wife he knows her in all conditions. The lover sees the woman only when she is disposed. The husband knows her at all seasons. He associates with her not only in the glory of youth but also as they travel the veil of tears. He learns about people from her. She disciplines him for his work with the church.

The sons and daughters of the bishop before us are the multiplication of his strength. They are capable of worthy accomplishments. They are in position to be an inspiration to other young people of the church. The young are indeed a valuable asset to the bishop. As fire is fought with fire so youth is influenced by youth. They have a sway with their associates which no one else can enjoy.

The approved bishop by educating his own children displayed an ability to lead others to reverence the name of the Lord. One who cannot direct the affairs of his own home would be embarrassed in charge of the church. If the companion involved was a hindrance, she may have broken down the fiber for execution in her husband. He is obliged to stand upon his own record of achievement. There is no alibi submitted that would sustain him.—JOHN W. PICC, in *Firm Foundation*, September 21, 1948, p. 5

The above is good eloquent reading and is calculated to do good and not harm. I am glad to see the husbandry and fatherhood of the man glorified. And motherhood improves the status of the woman. But all this splendid reading does not prove "the husband of one wife" is positive and not restrictive in Paul's usage of it with reference to the elder.

The material submitted in this chapter in opposition to my position on "the husband of one wife" is quite ample for letting the other side be heard and also to prove to the reader that the author's mind is not leaning to prejudice in this case. I have no axe to grind. I have only tried to dissuade the mind of the reader to what is shown elsewhere to be an underlying principle which is too often overlooked while arguing for an interpretation and meaning which I conceive to be foreign to the design of the Holy Spirit while he was prompting Paul to write.

I do not hold to my present conviction that "the husband of

one wife" is restrictive or prohibitive and not positive in order to avoid envolvement. But that is just what happens. It keeps me from absurdities and trying to explain the inexplicable. Note the explanation, in this chapter, that must be made in case of an elder losing his wife by death.

The one qualification for the elder is "blamelessness." Both the married and the unmarried man are blameless, regarding women, if they are living above all forms of adultery. And this blamelessness must continue on through his life as a Christian and an elder. And if one *must* have a wife, at the time of the appointment, to be blameless; then he would not remain blameless if his wife should die. And if he would remain blameless if his married status should be changed, why would not he also remain blameless if his status in any one, or, all the other qualities should be changed?

I still contend that no position is or can be correct in religion that human reason can reduce to an absurdity.

#### ANOTHER LOOK

A look at another quotation in this chapter is also interesting; and I quote

The husbandry of souls is the bishop's duty. . . . One must actually be the husband of a living, thinking, talking, choosing, requesting, determining woman. . . . That essential wisdom can be acquired in no other relation.

The bachelor can never fully understand people.

He has no adequate background from which he can see clearly the problems of life.

There are great recesses in his own being into whcih he has never gone.

The single man has never apprehended the fact that his happiness was suspended by the fantastic caprice of another.

The husband is overwhelmed and bewildered by the marvels of life.

He is astounded by the mystery of death.

He sees human life unadorned.

He can with compassion shepherd his fellow.

He can advise men.

He can admonish women.

He can counsel youth.

He learns about people from her (his wife).

And to think that all this wisdom and capacities and even the

knowledge and understanding of life were DENIED poor Brother Paul just because he did not use the "right to lead about a wife," who was a believer, even as the other apostles and brethren of the Lord did (I Corinthians 9:5). So for that reason, Paul could never "fully understand people."

He had "no adequate background from which he" could "see clearly the problems of life."

There were "great recesses in his own being into which he never went."

He "never apprehended the fact that his happiness was suspended by the fantastic caprice of another."

He was never "overwhelmed and bewildered by the marvels of life."

He was not "astounded by the mystery of death."

He never saw "human life unadorned."

He could not "with compassion shepherd his fellow."

He could not "advise men."

He could not "admonish women."

He could not "counsel youth."

He could not learn "about people from her" (His wife).

But hold where we are:

If this line of argument goes on we will learn (unless all these ideas are false) that the grand old apostle who was himself the outstanding hero and marvel of New Testament fame was no more than an incapable and inefficient Pharisee which reflects upon the Lord's ability to make a proper choice among men. *And all this for the simple reason Paul had no wife.*

But do you say Paul was provided with all these abilities by Inspiration? Not so, for it was not the mission of the Holy Spirit to provide these natural abilities which are to be acquired by study, training, and personal development. The Spirit was given to Paul for the express purpose of guiding him in speaking the TRUTH without error.

Suggestion:

May it not have been a providential act of God that Paul never

married, that the influence of such teaching and reasoning as herein set forth might be arrested? And does not the application of the above teaching to the Apostle Paul show conclusively that the contention that "the husband of one wife" is to be taken as a positive requirement is *unsound* and leads one into difficulties from which he cannot extricate himself, and cause him to lose sight of the true intent of the passage which being prohibitive is a stroke against any form of adultery finding its way into the eldership of the church of our Lord; but that the elder must be blameless regarding sex?

And the churches should use all precaution against adulterers being elevated to the responsible position or office of the presbytery.

Let's be careful not to get ourselves way out on a limb over the qualification of the elder.

But remember: The qualification necessary at the time of the appointment must be maintained on through one's tenure as an elder. For instance, "no striker," "not a brawler," "not given to wine," "sober," "just," "holy," "temperate," etc., are points of blamelessness, the maintenance of which is necessary even to the end.

And if "the husband of one wife," means the man *must* have a wife at the time of appointment in order to be blameless, then I insist that he *must* have a living wife throughout his tenure in office in order to remain blameless.

And if that is the case, then I will say again that the Old Hebron Church near Russellville, Kentucky, was justified in deposing one of her elders, old Brother John Lyons, when his wife died.

There is another contention that the reading of I Timothy 3 teaches that the elder must have a plurality of children; but that the deacon may have only one child to qualify.

The argument is, that Paul says of the deacons "ruling their children and their own houses well," and that Paul is contemplating the deacons, their houses (or households), and their children collectively and that houses mean only one house (or house-

hold or family) to the deacon and so children mean only one child to the deacon.

#### WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE ARGUMENT?

Why, I think it is such a plain case of juggling the Apostle's language that to attempt an answer would be a waste of time. I do not mean to say, nor, do I think they intended to or purposely juggle the Scriptures.

Only this may need be said: If Paul's teaching is that the offspring here is to be taken singularly, as the household of each deacon is to be taken, then he could not have more than one child unless he could have more than one household, or family.

I hardly think such positions are forced upon the ones who espouse them.

Why posterity is mentioned in the plural and not the singular is taken note of in this chapter and it may be well for the reader to turn back and reread that, together with the reason for the wives always being in the singular.

Paul puts it this way: "Let the deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their houses well" (I Tim. 3:12).

One writer reasons thusly: "Ruling their children and their own houses well," he says: "Their own houses is to be taken as only one house or household to the deacon. And so their children would mean only one child to the deacon." And he claims that Paul therefore put children in the singular with regard to the deacon. I contend that if this construction puts children in the singular, then one child is all the deacon may Scripturally have or else he may have more than one household.

And if this may be concluded from the construction of Paul's language, then how may we escape the conclusion that, when he said "let deacons be husbands of one wife," he meant that the deacons were to be husbands of the same woman? Note the expression: "husbands of one wife."

When *will* we learn the *truth*?

How do you account for the fact that there seems to be nearly as many different teachings on the eldership as there are preachers?

## AMBASSADORS

## WHO ARE THEY?

NOT LONG since I glanced through one of our local church papers and my eyes fell on this caption: "What I Owe My Minister." The first line ran as follows: "I owe him respect as the ambassador of God. . . ."

Without suggesting too much as to how all such publications should pass under the close scrutiny of a well informed *editor* I have somewhat to say about ambassadors. Without pretense at possessing super-knowledge, I have set before men in the pulpit while they spun out a long dissertation about their being God's ambassadors and marveled at what ignorance can possess supposedly well informed men.

Occasion has often presented itself for me to discuss this subject and I will here give only a summation of what may be said that the false idea may be corrected in the mind of some reader.

Any government has ministers of different rank to serve it in another land. So God has ministers of different ranking to serve him in the world.

There are at least three ministers alive in the church of our Lord on earth today, viz, there is the evangelist or preacher, the elder, and the deacon. Now which of these is qualified to be called an ambassador? Neither one. Do we say then, that God has no ambassador in the church now? No indeed, we hold no such position. Then who is, and what is, the ambassador? Let's see what the word means and what is the function of an ambassador.

*Ambassador.* "1. An official representative sent by or to a

sovereign or public body; an envoy or minister of state, a minister of high rank sent by one sovereign or state to another, usually called ambassador extraordinary; 2. A minister of the highest rank accredited to a foreign court to reside there and represent his sovereign or country; formerly specifically called ambassador ordinary or resident ambassador. Sometimes the word ambassador is loosely used interchangeably with "minister"; but it is specifically applied only to the highest of the four orders of diplomatic agents, as commonly classified. 3. Ambassador Plenipotentiary. One having plenary powers, including the power to sign treaties."—*Webster*

*Plenary.* "1. Full; entire; complete; absolute; unqualified; as, a plenary license, authority. 2. Fully attended or constituted; including all entitled to be present; said of an assembly, meeting, etc."—*Webster*

Webster states above that the ambassador is "the highest of the four orders of diplomatic agents." And he defines "diplomat" thusly: "diplomatic agent, an agent employed by a state in its diplomatic service, or its intercourse or negotiation with other states. By regulations adopted at the Congresses of Vienna and Aix-la-Chapelle, which are conformed to by all states. Diplomatic agents are divided, in the order of their precedence, into four classes, as follows: (1) Ambassadors, legates, nuncios; (2) envoys, ministers, or other persons accredited to the sovereign, internuncios; (3) ministers resident; (4) Charges d'affaires.

"Diplomatic agents of the first class are alone entitled to the so-called representative character, being considered as peculiarly representing the sovereign by which they are accredited, and as entitled to the same honors that would be due to their constituent were he personally present."—*Webster*

*Legate.* Two. "Ambassador or envoy; a delegate or messenger."—*Webster*

*Nuncio.* One. "A messenger."—*Webster*

## Now WHAT HAVE WE?

Note that Webster defines the word thusly: "Diplomatic agents of the first class are alone entitled to the so-called "Representative Character," being considered as peculiarly representing the sovereign by which they are accredited, and as entitled to the same honors that would be due to their constituent were he personally present." So Webster gives the ambassador as the first or highest of the four classes of ministers the United States Government maintains abroad, and states that the "Diplomat" is the only one worthy of the honor which may be conferred upon his constituent or government.

Were not the apostles clothed with authority and power to set forth laws to govern the church? Was their word not to be honored as was the word of Christ?

Did Christ not say: "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you"? And again, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me" (Matthew 10:20, 40). And again, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me" (John 13:20). And still again, "As thou didst send me into the world, even so send I them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word" (John 17:18-20).

We see, therefore, from these Scriptures that the words of the apostles are to be taken as the words of Christ and of God. And when one thinks the entire matter through he comes to see that we are wholly dependent upon the writings of the apostles and other inspired writers for every word of Christ and also the fact that he came to earth, lived, died, arose again, and ascended back to glory.

Paul therefore said: "We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." (II Corinthians

5:20): "On behalf of Christ," for him, in his stead, in his absence, in the place of, etc. So the apostles were the highest ranking ministers of God or Christ in the church. And although they have passed beyond we still have them in the same sense that the Jews had "Moses and the prophets" (Luke 16:29). And in as much as they spoke for Christ and represented him to the world, if we want to know what Christ would say upon any given subject pertaining to life eternal we must go to the words of the apostles and there is no other way under God's Heaven of our ascertaining such information. So he who hears the words of the apostles (his ambassadors) hears Christ and God. Otherwise, otherwise.

No living human therefore may justifiably be called Christ's or God's ambassador.

In consideration, therefore, of the foregoing may we not safely conclude that if they cannot all be regarded in an official capacity; that God, nevertheless, has four groups of ministerial servants in the church ecumenical on earth, viz., Ambassadors, Ministers or Preachers, Elders, and Deacons?

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#### SWEET AND COMPLETE

*All the lessons He shall send  
Are the sweetest:  
And His training, in the end,  
Is completest.*

—F. R. HAVERGAL

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CONTUMACIOUSNESS AND TYRANNY

**C**ON TU-MA CIOUS-NESS. "This word carries the idea of contemning authority; of being obstinate; stubborn; disobedient; rebellious."—Webster

This perverse quality leads one to despise a position of subordination and to disregard the authority of his superiors which ultimately and inevitably carries one into the sin of presumption.

*Tyranny or Tyrant.* "A severe or cruel ruler; a usurper; unrestrained by law; arbitrary or despotic exercise of power over subjects with a rigor not authorized by law or justice."—Webster

King Saul presents a good example of this sin, who disregarded the words of Jehovah and chose to follow his own way and excused his conduct on the ground that the flocks and herds were brought back to offer to the Lord an offering or sacrifice in Gilgal. To whom the great prophet Samuel said: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord he hath also rejected thee from being king" (I Samuel 15:22, 23). This happening in his day may have influenced David to write: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression" (Psalm 19:13).

The disposition apparent in Saul's conduct has a tendency toward tyranny for it requires in one a spirit of subjection for him to be considerate of law and subjects under him.

That there are men who have been appointed elders over

congregations who, to carry their ideals to their logical conclusion, disregard the law of the Lord and rule the church in a high-handed way that Peter describes "as lording it over the charge allotted to you," (I Peter 5:3) may not easily be denied by any one who, in a general way, is acquainted with the churches. This conduct may properly be referred to as "Bossism." When one thus deports himself his conduct is a reflection upon the church and the cause of Christ in that community, may not only lose its influence for good, but be looked upon with contempt.

I hope my brother elders everywhere will consider and appreciate the fact that when they are appointed over a church of our Lord that, whether they are qualified or not, the Lord will lay upon them all the responsibilities of said office. If you were qualified I am sure your faith, love, patience, etc., will lead you right into the discharge of the functions of the position and the reward of His grace shall be yours to enjoy. But, if you were not qualified and yet accepted the appointment be assured the Lord will hold you responsible if you do not qualify for the proper discharge of the duties of the position.

Know you not that the eldership in the Church of the Living God is the highest position one may occupy upon this earth and that God will not hold him guiltless who uses that office as a means to accomplish his own selfish ends which may easily cause the word of God to be blasphemed? May the seriousness of this problem cause those who are using the office of the eldership for their own selfish purposes instead of being examples to the flock become so disturbed and troubled in heart that they may not sleep at night nor have ease of conscience by day to the end that they will either relinquish the office or else allow deep conviction and conversion to lay hold of their hearts and souls and make of them "vessels unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Timothy 2:21).

"What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). "For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even

to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66:2).

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:7, 8).

Brother R. H. Boll, in his book on the Hebrew Letter, wrote of the elders' rule as follows:

It is well here to consider Matthew 20:25-28. The elders have no absolute authority or rule. It is written (by Peter himself, fortunately, to the confounding of the extravagant claims of those styled his successors) that they were not to *lord* it over God's heritage (I Peter 5:2, 3). Christ alone is ruler and Lord. But the elders, by loving concern for the welfare of the souls, by patient teaching and the power of true example, were to keep the Christians in the way of truth.

It is not the elder's privilege to command, to dictate, to make arbitrary rules and requirements. *The fear of being lorded over by self-willed, puffed-up stubborn men prevents many congregations from having any elders at all.* It would, indeed, be a bad move to place such power in the hands of a few men who think they must thenceforth take it upon themselves to "run" the church and possibly *tyrannize* over it. But that never was God's will. The elder's rule lies simply in the gospel—the teaching and practice of the same. But in matters of expediency, while their judgment is always worthy of special deference, they can submit as gracefully as any one else. pp. 208, 209

Brother H. Leo Boles also suggested that we should not forget that some preachers are also *stubborn* and *tyrannical* in their dealings with the churches and the brethren.



## PLURALITY—ANOTHER ERROR

**H**OW EASY it is for honest good-meaning men to be led into an erroneous idea and thus become an ardent advocate of error needs no proof.

There is no doubt in the mind of any one that a plurality of elders is required by the New Testament Scriptures; but what constitutes a plurality in view of the New Testament requirement is a matter of dispute. For instance, there are those who claim that the writings of the apostles in the original used a word *presbuteros* (pres-boo-ter-os) in a form which requires at least three men to meet its demands. The argument is that the Greek had three forms or numbers of speech, viz., "singular," meaning only one; "dual," meaning two, no more and no less; and the "plural," meaning at least three or more. Whereas, the English has only two forms or numbers, viz., "singular," only one; and "plural," meaning two or more. They argue that inasmuch as the Greek in speaking of the elders always uses the plural form that therefore there must be at least three elders to meet the Scriptural requirement.

It, I suppose, is needless for me to state that I fell victim to this error for there are many who will recall hearing me preach it thus. But I have long since learned that when one sees he is mistaken in any matter the smart thing to do is to change.

I have in my possession writings over the signatures of some of our most widely known preachers, which would indicate the correctness of the above position which encouraged me in my earnest insistence of that position; but recently I was led into a more thorough study of the matter that this book and its influence may be freer of error.

After extensive study and discussion in the exchange of letters, I addressed an inquiry to Brother John L. Rainey, at David Lipscomb College, who together with Brother S. C. Boyce gave me full advantage of their findings and although there are answers they gave to direct questions I sent to them, the following final answer from Brother Rainey will most likely be sufficient:

*Dear Brother Winkler:*

Your letter has been received and contents noted.

Mr. Webster spoke of Hellenistic or Hellenic Greek—I called it (*κοινή*) *Koinee*. Those spoken of as Hellenists were foreigners (for example Jews) who spoke the Greek Language and followed Greek Customs.

You ask: "Did the Hellenistic tongue ever carry the dual number." *Ans:* It (the dual) never won a foothold in the Aeolic and the new Ionic, and its use in the Attic was limited and not consistent. The dual is nearly gone in the late Attic inscriptions; while in the *κοινή* (Hellenistic) it is only sporadic and constantly vanishing in the inscriptions and Papyri. In Pergamum and Pisidia no dual appears in the inscriptions."—A. T. ROBERTSON, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 251, (1914).

Your next question: "If so, had it dropped the Dual and had become the common language in New Testament days?" *Ans:* The New Testament Greek has lost the dual (*συχός*) and uses only the singular *ἐνικός* and the plural *πληνουντχός*.—A. T. ROBERTSON, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 251, (1914 ed). In essentials of New Testament Greek Huddleston says: "Gramatically, very wide changes from the Classical Greek may be noted. 1. The dual number has disappeared entirely."—Intro., p. XXI, (21). I hope that these quotations will be of service to you.

Faternally yours,

JNO. L. RAINY

From my discussions of this matter and the above letter with quotations it was noted that it was the Classical Greek that played up the three numbers of speech: Singular, *one*; Dual, *two*; and Plural, *three or more*; but that the Hellenists who spoke the *Koinee* (common) Greek did not use the dual number and that the New Testament was written in the Hellenistic or *Koinee* (common) Greek.

From this it appears that we must conclude that the New Testament plural for elders (and the plural is always used) is equal to the English plural and therefore two or more elders meets the Divine or Scriptural requirement.

So then, away with our half-hearted investigation and erroneous conclusions and let us get to the bottom of Scriptural teaching (as much as it is humanly possible) on this and all other subjects.

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### A MISPLACED SACRIFICE

“. . . . . God has not promised to bless every endeavor, even with the best of human motives. It is only when we have *placed the sacrifice upon the altar of God's choice, and in His appointed place* [Italics mine, H. E. W.] that we have a right to expect God to fully bless us. . . . . When we see His face, marred because of our sins, whose sweat-drops, ‘as blood,’ stained the soil of the garden, and who ‘gave Himself for us upon the cross, our hearts will be stirred with a love for Him that will prompt us to cry out from the dusty road of self-surrender: ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? . . . . and to do the whole will of God is the sole purpose of a believer's consecration to the Lord. Having placed ourselves upon the altar of His choice, and in true devotion to Him, we may truthfully, trustfully sing, with joy in our hearts:

“I'll go where you want me to go,  
    dear Lord,  
O'er mountain, or plain, or sea;  
I'll say what you want me to say,  
    dear Lord,  
I'll be what you want me to be.”

—E. L. PEARSON in *The Christlife Magazine*

## THIS "PASTOR" CRAZE IS "SMELLING"

In one of our publications, a "staff writer" astonishes me by this language: "Since an evangelist is given power to exercise 'all authority' over a number of churches, and whereas, an elder has only partial authority in only one congregation, it follows that the authority of the evangelist supersedes that of the elder or the eldership."

The publication that allows such doctrine published, badly needs an editor! That is simply the seed germ of the Papacy. From exactly that idea sprang what is now the Catholic Hierarchy. The doctrine reposes all *overship* in the hands of the evangelist, rendering the *Eldership* merely a figurehead and a farce. Young preachers *need teaching* before they rush in with puerile ideas that will do only harm to the cause. Such preachers are rapidly displacing God's Eldership with "pastors," and subjecting the churches of Christ to every form of evil. At best, our Elders are not too qualified and energized to *feed the flock of God*, and this "Pastor" aggrandizement is making things worse. Such an idea as that expressed above is as far from the New Testament as is the See of Rome. In fact, it has the germ of that organization in every potentiality. If such papers are not going to be *edited they should cease to be issued*. Their harmfulness is immense.

### COMMENT

The above article is copied from *The Vindicator* of April, 1949, p. 7, and is from the pen of that fearless exponent of New Testament teaching, Brother E. C. Fuqua.

So far as I have been able to see the teaching, I have not been able to condemn the "Located Minister System" or practice from a Scriptural standpoint. And I think that with a Scriptural Eldership in each of the churches of Christ in the complete brotherhood there would be no cause for alarm.

The position presented in the above article together with other irregularities is what urged me on in the writing of this book on the Eldership, in which I have dealt with all sorts of

church and elder problems, in a way, which no other book in the brotherhood, to my knowledge, has handled them.

Such writings as the above should be banned from all our publications; their authors taught the word of the Lord more perfectly; and if they will not disavow such positions they should be hounded from our pulpits.

They are striking at the very foundation of the Scriptural organization of *the Church* in such a manner that the Lord will show no leniency or mercy, so why should we?

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*"There are foes that must be conquered,  
There are battles we must win;  
There are lands that must be taken,  
That are going down in sin.*

*"Let us enter in life's struggle,  
Ever march upon our way;  
We must take the world  
For God and win the day.*

*"On to victory, on to victory,  
On to victory the foe must die.  
On to victory, on to victory,  
On to victory we'll conquer by and by."*

## UNREINED PREACHERS

**H**E WHO ASSUMES to function in any given capacity is usually regarded as one possessing a knowledge and appreciation of the duties, obligations, and responsibilities attaching thereto. And should one manifest a spirit of indifference respecting them he would justly be regarded as an irresponsible.

Those who fully accept the autonomic status of the local congregation usually accept the fact that the eldership in the local church is the highest earthly authority in the church of our Lord. Nor should we forget that the elder's authority is prescribed and limited by the Will and Testament of Christ by which right He is the Chief Shepherd and Elder. Of this truth no one should be more familiar than the minister or the traveling evangelist; for he should be prepared to teach every phase of the doctrine of Christ. That being true every preacher should readily accept the fact that he has no authority over the church where he labors unless he has been so appointed to that authority. And I think I occupy safe grounds when I say it is a mistake to appoint the local minister to any position of authority over the congregation.

It is unpleasant to accuse my brethren; but there are too many (and one would be too many) of our preaching brethren who do not want to work under a well informed and active eldership. Some of them, when they accept a call to labor with a congregation which does not have an adequate eldership, do not want the question of appointing more elders brought up for discussion while they are there.

Brethren, will you not agree with me, that if the preacher has the cause of Christ uppermost in his heart instead of his own selfish, personal interest, it will be his desire to see the congregation established on a safe Scriptural basis in order that God's

word may be honored and glorified and souls saved?

The genuinely converted preacher will glory in the privilege of working with a well ordered church for there he knows God is having His way with His children.

Every preacher laboring with a congregation should assume and occupy the status of a hired servant of the congregation, employed for the express purpose of assisting the church in that respective community in building up and strengthening the church in every good work.

It was Paul's ambition to establish churches and set over them elders in completion of the organization of The New Testament Church.

If the organization of any society, institution, or nation ceases to exist it is headed for the reef upon which it may easily be dashed to pieces.

Paul was glad to return to make report to the elders of the church in Antioch in Syria by whom he had been sent out on his first great missionary tour. So every preacher should readily accept the truth that he is not exempt from the rule of the elders. For here is *constituted authority* which the Lord saw fit to put into operation in his church or kingdom on earth and which he ordained should reside in the Eldership of his own appointment.

There is constituted authority in the governmental affairs of our country and the highest official is in no measure exempt from that authority. Every minister of the gospel whether located or out in the capacity of an itinerate evangelist should appreciate the righteousness of being, himself, under the supervision of a competent eldership of some local church and answerable to them.

But alas, it is a sad commentary that there are many preachers, with no reins to hold them in check, running to and fro over the country doing as they please; some seeking for money; some for recognition, prestige, and power; some seeking an opportunity to satisfy their fleshly lusts, etc, etc. And these, carrying their membership in their pockets—as they blatantly remark—recognizing no local church as their home congregation (I myself have

heard them), dare a congregation to even try to discipline them.

No, I am not a pessimist and don't wish to be so regarded, but it is folly for an optimist to become so blinded as not to see and appreciate the darkness when the sun stops shining.

Such men as referred to above are a blight upon the *ministry* which reflects upon and often casts suspicion upon that class of godly men—and they are many—who are sacrificing the very necessities of life and going hither and yon, foregoing the association of their wives and children, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to the glory of God and the salvation of souls, because woe is them if they proclaim it not. These are holy men of God fulfilling a God-given mission for "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." And they recognize the Scriptural organization of the church and the rightful authority of the Eldership and are glad to be amenable to that set of Spiritual Overseers which God was pleased to set over His church of which all preachers are or should be a part.

The reward of a faithful Christian, be he a preacher, elder, deacon, or just a member, is over yonder, and far greater than any earthly compensation. But of him who labors for worldly advantage whether in the way of financial gain, prestige, fame, or lustful pursuits, Christ says: "Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward." And having their reward here there is none laid up for them on the other side of the river.

"Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk even as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Philippians 3:17-19).

"And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not. . . . For, uttering great swelling words of vanity, they entice in the lust of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping from them that live

in error; promising them liberty, while they themselves are bond-servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage" (II Peter 2:3, 18, 19).

"For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:10, 11).

Blessed is that preacher, therefore, who honors all of God's arrangements and appointments and has the courage to go forth preaching what his auditors need and not what they want. Men who are all wool and a yard wide, of whom it may be truthfully said, "He will stand hitched," or "You can put your finger on him."

Truly, "men who God poured in big moulds, and made a perfect pouring. Every one ringing true with no false notes."

After finishing the above article I came across this fine expression from Brother F. L. Paisley in the *Firm Foundation* p. 7, October 18, 1949. I head his remarks with a clause taken from the body of the quotation:

#### THE MOST FORTUNATE PREACHERS ON EARTH

Some of the best men in the world are true men of God—elders, bishops—doing a most excellent service. Churches have not taken on such expansions in ability and accomplishments without them. They are wide awake, consecrated to the Lord, love the church, and noble examples to the believers every day. God ordained the office—the work—set the standard for men filling it, and that standard is not beyond the reach of any godly, gifted man who "desires the offices of a bishop" with the sort of desire that word means. *The most fortunate preachers on earth* are those working under such men—men of vision and spirit to defend the truth, who protect the preacher from unjust abuse and misrepresentations while preaching and living the gospel of Christ.

#### BROTHER PREACHER, WHAT IS YOUR CHOICE?

It may not be amiss here to mention another destructive characteristic:

## ENVY

Many years past there was a group of several of the "Pioneer Preachers" who had gathered to discuss how best they might advance the Cause of Christ. They had discussed some advantages and disadvantages and conversation, having drifted largely to the deterrent hindrances, *envy* reared its ugly head for consideration. Considerable Round Table discussion had been indulged when Dr. T. W. Brents arose to briefly send his searching remarks deep into the thinking apparatus of each of his auditors. After elaborating on the evil effects and the destructive influence of this enemy, Brother Brents expostulated thusly: "Brethren, if you want to find envy, go among the churches," and laying his hand upon the head of Brother S. R. Logue who was sitting close by, he added: "And if you want to find the queen essence of *envy* go among the preachers."

"It seems, that I can almost hear many saying "How true!"

This tendency works so instantly and under cover in the minds of its victims that they often unconsciously yield to its leadings and follow on unmindful of whither they go until they have gotten so far to the "Left" with their minds gradually trained in that direction that something comparable to the voice of "Balaam's ass" to shock them into recognition of danger is necessary. Like carbon monoxide, *odorless, colorless, and tasteless; but deadly.*

Many preachers are envious of the ability, reputation, advancement, the call to labor with large congregations to which others have attained. And there is that envious disposition on the part of some to impugn one's motive, to speak against, to weaken the other's influence, to enlarge upon some rumor that has started, to smear one's character and to ruin the reputation of a fellow preacher.

## FOR WHAT?

That they may be called for certain meetings; to get located with some good paying church; to get their names in the headlines of religious journals.

## WHY?

"For they loved," maybe unconsciously, "the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43).

Brother, are you guilty? Then don't come to see me. There is nothing I can do. Use the quickest available means of contacting heaven. The need is urgent. God will report to you via the Holy Spirit on what to do about it.

I submit a sample of the report you will get:

"Love *envieth not*" (I Corinthians 13:4).

"Lest there be debates, *envyings*, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults" (II Corinthians 12:20 A.V.).

"Some indeed preach Christ even of *envy* and *strife*" (Philippians 1:15).

"Whereof cometh *envy*, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth" (I Timothy 6:4, 5).

"Serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and *envy*, hateful, hating one another" (Titus 3:3).

"But if ye have bitter *envying* and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. For where *envying* and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (James 3:14, 16 A.V.).

"Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to *envy*?" (James 4:5 A.V.).

"Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and *envies*, and all evil speakings" (I Peter 2:1).

"Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, *envying* one another." "*Envying*, drunkenness, revealings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:26, 21).

"Let him that readeth understand" (Jesus).

A close reading of the above Scriptures will reveal the fact that in some of them the Greek for "envies" in the King James Version is translated "Jealousies" in the Revised Standard Edition which shows the two evils to be very closely allied. And thus that *green-eyed monster* *jealously* shows its ugly and destructive

personality in the *envious* disposition of both elders, deacons, deaconesses, preachers, and members in the churches.

Blessed is he who looks to the Lord,  
And upon his own strength does not rely,  
Who builds character by God's own Word,  
To whom the above does not apply.

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### ABUSING LIBERTY

A young woman, defending her continual attendance at some very doubtful place of amusement, declared: "I think a Christian can go anywhere." Her friend answered: "Certainly she can; but I am reminded of a little incident last summer when I went with friends to explore a coal mine. One of them appeared in a dainty white gown. When her friends remonstrated, she appealed to the miner who was guide: "Can't I wear this white dress down in the mine?" He replied: "Yes'm, there's nothing to keep you from wearing white down, but there's considerable to keep you from wearing one back" (Clarion).

## TROUBLE SHOOTERS

IT HAS BEEN known in the past that some high up preacher (in his own estimation maybe) upon hearing of a church out yonder somewhere that was in trouble and having difficulty getting it settled would on his own initiative dispatch some young preacher to that congregation (without being invited) to assist in straightening things out.

Who authorized anybody or made you or any one else a trouble shooter among and for the churches?

This thing is fraught with what may easily lead to grave repercussions. For instance the preacher, whether young or old, goes into the community knowing no one, and known by nobody, with no knowledge of the trouble as to who and what started it, nor the guilt or innocence of any one involved.

In that case what will he do?

Here is a fair example of what will happen: A boy hears some dogs fighting. He runs to look on. He knows nothing about which dog started the fight or why. He has looked on for only seconds, and he has picked out one of those dogs, he knows not why, that he wants to see win the fight.

So this preacher goes into the meeting, the arguments start and warm up to a dispute, charging serious accusations pro and con. What does he do? What can he do to better matters? While he knows nothing of the angles involved, and his better judgment would tell him otherwise, yet before he is aware of what he has done he finds himself lined up with one side and trying to convince the others that they are wrong.

Fortunately, I have been called only a few times to assist congregations in handling certain "trouble making brethren" whom

I knew, and was called because the congregations knew I had struck swords with them before and knew how to handle them.

But to press myself into trouble of which I have no knowledge whatsoever is something for which I have no taste. Did some one suggest that "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread"?

Brother, it is fine to assist in any trouble where we can be of real help; but one should know all the angles attached to any case before he renders a decision. Without the necessary knowledge one might render a very unwarranted decision which might easily cost some one his soul and bring upon himself guilt that would humble him before Jehovah.

If we can help, let's help; but if we can't let's try not to make bad matters worse.

Maybe nothing more need be said.

It is a blessed thought that elders of churches might keep themselves free from whatever guilt attaches in such cases as above contemplated.

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### FOOT PRINTS

"Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again."

## HOLY SPIRIT—"MADE" ELDERS

BY E. C. FUQUA

**I**N AS MUCH as I set my hand in the beginning not only to set forth the New Testament teaching, but to examine all theories which have been brought to my attention, on the subject in hand, I wish to give in full a dispatch from Detroit, and I quote:

*Dear Brother Fuqua:*

I was very much surprised to find your position on the Eldership question in the January, 1948, *Vindicator*.

Acts 20:28 says that the Holy Spirit makes Elders, and no place in the Bible is man given the right to make them.

In the church of Christ we need a "thus saith the Lord" for all that we do in worshiping the Lord.

The practice of congregations appointing Elders is purely tradition and should be abolished.

In Acts 14:21 Paul and Barnabas appointed Elders for the congregation. Paul had the Holy Spirit.

In Titus 1:5, Titus had Paul's written authority to appoint Elders. In neither case did the congregation have anything to do with it.

Read your Bible, Brother Fuqua, and you will see that I am right. Let us cast out tradition. Elders are appointed by the Holy Spirit. In how many cases are "congregational-appointed Elders Scriptural Elders?"

Yours in Christ,

DONALD A. BLACK

The above is taken from *The Vindicator* of March, 1948, p. 13.

In one of the chapters on "Ordination or Appointment" the reader will note that this writer stands Four Square for Holy Spirit made elders. If they are not thus made they may not be worth a dime a dozen. But what this man clamours for is a far cry from Holy Spirit made elders according to the Scriptures.

Brother Black says:

"Acts 20:28 says that the Holy Spirit makes elders, and no place in the Bible is man given the right to make them.

"Elders are appointed by the Holy Spirit.

"The practice of congregations appointing Elders is purely tradition and should be abolished."

About two good doses of Scriptural teaching will portray the fallacy of the idea and so I do not deem any sort of an answer necessary and thus leave the article as it is other than to ask a few questions to provoke thought.

What did the Holy Spirit do *in person*, in any line, without some medium or agency through which to operate?

In what congregation did the Holy Spirit appoint elders without using an earthly vessel as a medium?

If the Holy Spirit is to appoint elders now **IN PERSON** without an agency how may we know whom he appoints?

The days of miraculous demonstrations are past.

So he whom the Holy Spirit should appoint as an elder would have no way of knowing of his appointment.

And again, the congregation would have no means of knowing that Brother A. or B., had been appointed an elder by the Holy Spirit.

A necessary consequence of which would be, the church would have no elders.

I think, therefore, Brother Black should have simply told Brother Fuqua that he was opposed to having elders in the church now. That is the clear way every anti-elder preacher should express himself.

If he is "agin it" let him say so.

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## MORE OF SATAN'S CUNNING

BY E. C. FUQUA

From the *Vindicator* of June, 1949, p. 11, I copy the following:

*Dear Brother Fuqua:*

We have a brother in the church here who has been an elder for six years, has four children, all members except the youngest, who is 22 years old, but comes to church all the time. Now, this elder's father don't think his son is qualified to be an elder, on account of his youngest son not being a member, which has thrown a doubt over him to the point that he offers to resign, telling the church why. So we thought we would like to hear from you through the *Vindicator*, as to what the Bible teaches about this. This elder is a fine man, studies so hard, is a fine teacher; the only thing is, Is he disqualified on account of that son?

—A SISTER IN CHRIST

(Brother Fuqua replies)

It being conceded that this one thing is thought to disqualify our brother as an elder—That he is qualified in all other points—I can only say that this does not disqualify him, for he still has believing children.

If we drive these qualifications too severely, there will not be a man in a hundred thousand qualified to be an elder—in the eyes of some. I know of a case where it is taught, that if a man is perfectly qualified, and has two children, both members of the church; if one of the two children dies, that disqualifies him, seeing he no longer has "believing children"! All such attacks upon elders are *Nothing But the Attempt of Satan to Destroy All Overseership in the Churches, That He May Be Unmolested in His Determination to Seize the Sheep in the Absence of the Shepherds.*" [Italics mine.—H. E. W.]

According to the statement above, the elder is a man more of whom are badly needed in the church today. To discard such a man merely on the ground that one of his *four children* is not a member, would be foolish—would expose the church to “wolves” indeed.

I appreciate the frankness with which Brother Fuqua handled this.

Churches of Christ, most of them, have been educated up to the point of looking for a preacher who is a graduate from one of “Our Bible Colleges” to do their located work or conduct the annual meeting. For as much as it has come to that the Colleges should add, in their Bible courses, a department for teaching *Leadership* where the subject of the *Eldership* in the churches will be thoroughly taught by some *Veteran* who has a real sensible Bible understanding of the New Testament teaching.

If we only had Scripturally qualified elders in all the churches of Christ they would be able to take care of all the crackpot theories that are being advocated by all too many preachers “Going to and fro in the earth, and . . . . walking up and down in it,” not having the proper understanding of the Word.

How many, are there, going to school studying to be an elder in the church of our Lord?

Don’t you agree with me that the present situation presents a most serious challenge to “Our Colleges”? And can’t they render a most invaluable service in this particular line of Christian Education?

Can it be, that elders are not paid for their service is the reason so few aspire to this work and prepare for the High Calling?

I know of a good brother in the church over in Arkansas who is reported to have an excellent character and well reported of who has aspired to be an elder and is reported to me as having prepared himself for the service. He has a good Christian woman to wife. But, they have no children.

This brother has been taught that having no children dis-

qualifies him for the work and is grieved that he cannot act in such a noble capacity.

Would you try to force me to believe that teaching?

I think I have correctly answered the erroneous teaching on "Husband of One Wife," and "Having Children That Believe."

And I would suggest that you read all I have written in this book on those points, marking it as you read, and if it can be shown that I am wrong then "Let God be found true, but me "a liar" (Romans 3:4).

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A friend said to John Newton, "I cannot see the doctrine of the atonement in the scriptures." Mr. Newton replied, "I tried to light my candle the other evening with the extinguisher on it." As the scarlet thread runs through all the cordage of the British Navy, so the atonement of Christ runs through all the teaching of the Bible.—  
A. C. DIXON, D. D.

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HELPFUL READING FROM LEARNED MEN

WISH to quote, by permission, some more wonderful reading from Brother John W. Pigg:

"Among the most holy and laudable aspirations is the desire to be an elder in the church of God. An eager ambition to serve in that capacity is righteous and praiseworthy. One who accords honor and esteem to the elders strengthens the church by making their office the most attractive. A harsh comment concerning one in that position may chill the enthusiasm in a noble person for that scripturally approved employment.

The bishop of the text possesses hidden power. In the momentum of his activities of moral soundness and unbroken integrity he does the bidding of the Lord with skill and dispatch. The shield of righteousness covering the years of his life protects him from the critic and the cynic. Men concur in the acclamation that he is a good man.

The eyes of the bishop described equipment for his post. His vigilance retains him in the service. No deceiver can so completely camouflage sin that he will not detect it. He sees things in their true proportion. He does not confuse mice and men. He does not regard the malignant as trivial. He is sober. One who does not correctly interpret that which meets his eyes profits little by sight. One must discern the wolf in sheep's clothing to pass the test for the eldership.

This bishop's life is worthy the earnest emulation of those for whom he is responsible. He demonstrates the teaching he advocates. He uses the product he advertizes. He takes the remedy he features in his testimonial. It shows in him the results desired.

The bishop introduced deals with a bountiful hand. Many eat at his ample board. Charity is a cardinal of Christianity with him. He is an exponent of the system.

The bishop depicted is an efficient teacher. He has made thorough preparation and gained an adequate endowment for the significant assignment. His is a natural and sincere force. He stands on two legs. They are clear thinking and concise expression. On them he advances to great attainment. If in either of these one is lame one will limp to a forced landing.

The bishop pictured gives himself to the Lord rather than to wine. Wine is a shrewd, wicked and unreasonable master. It makes clowns and fools of women and men. One given to wine is consigned to wretchedness. It takes honor, dignity and character away.

Striking is unbecoming in the bishop portrayed. Care and tenderness are not compatible with blows. The defenseless need protection and assistance. The desire for gain should not dictate the policy of the bishop. Greed is a miserable driver. It should never be permitted to draw the reins over the bishop. Prosperity is good. Hospitality is contingent upon it. The hand of greed should never come upon the store of human food. Greed is selfish. It renders one unfit for leadership.

Patience is a requisite of the bishop set forth. Sufferers come to him. They need sympathy. He ought to carry the weak in his arm like a nursing father. He should walk along with men in the way they are able to journey.

Brawling words do not issue from the bishop of first Timothy three. They are not like golden apples in a bag transparent. The still small voice did the troubled prophet good. Words that move men may be gently spoken. Sense is more essential than noise.

The immature is seldom able to maintain a modest bearing with the honor of the eldership upon him. He is most likely to become vain. Conceit to be expected. In vanity the beginner mounts to a dangerous height. In the evil hour he falls. It takes time to fit one for the office of bishop.

New members come from the outside. Men are baptized into Christ. The model bishop was favorably known beyond the membership. By his contact with people he was able to draw them to the church of the Lord.

Jesus is our perfect example. We are urged to walk in his steps, think his thoughts, utter his words and be like him. The bishop has a perfect specimen to follow. We who are not members only should bear with him in his human weakness. We should pray God to do likewise.

JOHN W. PICC

## THE POINTS OF QUALIFICATION DEFINED

BY L. R. WILSON

Moreover, in the New Testament churches the elders, the bishops, and the pastors were the same men. This is evident from the 20th chapter of Acts. In verse 17 we read: "And from Miletus he (Paul) sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church." The original word for "elders" here is *presbuterous*, sometimes called "presbyters." It suggests men of mature age and experience. When these elders had come down Paul said to them, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (verse 28). Speaking to the elders, he calls them the bishops; and in the same breath he tells them "to feed" the church. The word for "feed" is *poimaino* and has a significance much broader than merely supplying food. It signifies to "care for" or "tend" the church, as a shepherd tends his flock. The verb *poimaino* is from the root *poimeen*, which in its noun form is translated "shepherd" or "pastor."

The word "bishop" is a combination of the words *epi*, meaning upon or over, and *skopos*, meaning to see. Hence, the two words, when taken together, form the word *episkopos*, meaning overseer. Bishop is of Anglo-Saxon origin, and is a corruption of the Greek *episkopos*. Taking all these together we get a proper perspective of the officers who superintend the spiritual welfare of the church. If we think of them as men of mature age and experience, then they are the elders or presbyters. If we have in mind the men who take the oversight, then they are the bishops or overseers. If we think of them as men who feed and care for the church, then they are the shepherds or pastors. But in any case they are the same men. The New Testament church did not have a pastor over one congregation, an elder over fifty and a bishop over a thousand.

We next notice the qualifications. Paul lists twenty different qualifications. I do not understand that the elders are perfect men. God's standards are all perfect, though his servants are not. God's standard for a Christian is perfect. Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). It is not likely that we shall ever measure up to any of God's perfect standards here. Nevertheless, we should constantly strive to do so. Any man who does not show by his conduct that he is striving to do so certainly ought not to be ordained an elder.

The qualifications set forth by Paul are found in 1 Timothy the third chapter, and in the first chapter of Titus. By combining the two passages, we have the following:

1. Without reproach	12. Not contentious
✓2. Husband of one wife	13. No lover of money
✓3. Rules well his own house	14. Not a novice
4. Temperate	15. Of good testimony from without
✓5. Soberminded	✓16. Not self-willed
6. Orderly	17. A lover of good
✓7. Given to hospitality	18. Just
8. Apt to teach	19. Holy
✓9. No brawler	20. Sound in the faith
· 10. No striker	
11. Gentle	

There is not a single characteristic here enumerated that a Christian should not strive to develop. Of course, every one is a novice when first converted. But we should not long remain such. Certainly if men do not develop these qualifications to a certain degree they should not be honored by being placed over the house of God. Let us take a look at each of these terms.

1. "Without reproach" simply means that one ought to live in such a way that no reproach or blame will rest upon him. This

term of itself does not signify sinless perfection.

2. "The husband of one wife" has been interpreted in a number of ways. It is always safe to appoint men who have one and only one wife, provided of course they possess the other qualifications in a fair degree.

3. "One that rules well his own house" signifies a man whose family is faithful to the Lord and his church. Paul very appropriately adds, "If a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the house of God?" Without clearer testimony we should not suppose that a man's children must all be old enough to obey the gospel before he can qualify for an elder. But certainly they should be obedient and well-behaved children.

4. "Temperate" signifies self-control. This applies to the whole of man's life, his eating, drinking, temper, and all of his habits.

5. "Soberminded" suggests that a man should not be wholly given to silly, childish things. It does not mean that a man should never have any humor, but he who never has a serious thought is certainly excluded from this high office.

6. "Orderly" signifies a well-directed course of life. A man who is sloven, careless, and haphazard in his life and work has no business trying to direct the work of the Lord. I dare say this qualification has been overlooked more than any other one. Many of the churches have no system or order whatsoever in their work. Everything is done in a hit-or-miss sort of fashion.

7. "Given to hospitality" suggests that the elders should be courteous, friendly, and kindly disposed. Some go about with a sour look, and a grunt, and are as cold as an ice cube. Elders should seek to develop a good personality. They should be able to cheer others along their way. They should be able to give others a real conception of what Christianity will do for one. Such men will do much for a community or congregation.

8. "Apt to teach" means that the elders should be qualified to teach others the word of God. A man cannot feed the flock who is unable to teach the word. The elders may not do all the

teaching, but all the teaching should be done under their supervision; and if they are not able to teach they are hardly capable of judging of the ability of others to teach.

9. "No brawler" means that one should not always be in some sort of a mix-up and a squabble. Some men are always in a "yow-yow." No man can be a Scriptural elder and be always in a "stew." Men who "fuss" over the eldership have no business in the eldership.

10. "No striker." He must not be pugnacious, too quick on the trigger, always ready to take offense and fight somebody.

11. "Gentle" means genteel, refined, polite, courteous, well-bred, peaceful, not harsh or of a turbulent nature.

12. "Not contentious." The last three qualifications are very closely akin. They, when taken together, make it very emphatic that the elders should avoid arguments, squabbles, quarrels, and rackets. A man may have firm convictions without always being in a fuss with somebody. The quickest way to destroy a congregation is for the elders to get into a fuss with the congregation, or among themselves. Some of the most contentious men that I ever saw were trying to serve as elders of a church.

13. "No lover of money." He must not be covetous. The man whose heart is set on making money has neither the time nor desire sufficient to be an overseer in the house of God.

14. "No novice." He should be a man who has proven himself, and his loyalty to the word of God. A man whom all know to be worthy of the honor conferred upon him.

15. "Of good testimony from without." What other people think of us is very important. No man can be an influence for good who is not respected by all classes. No man should be appointed an elder whose life and conduct are questioned, even by those of the world.

16. "Not self-willed." This qualification is often ignored. Some of the most self-willed men in the world are trying to serve as elders. The apostasy of the church grew out of this very thing. The pope grew up because of this very spirit. If there is any one

qualification that should be considered more than any other in appointing elders it appears that this is it. To be an elder a man should be very considerate of the rights and needs of others. He should be easily approached and entreated.

17. "A lover of good." That is, a lover of good deeds, good things, good people, and good in general. He cannot develop good qualities in others if he does not love such himself.

18. "Just" signifies that he must deal fairly, honestly, and in an upright manner with all people.

19. "Holy" signifies that his life must be pure, clean, godly, and honorable.

20. "Sound in the faith" means that he must have a clear knowledge of God's word; he must stand for what is right. He must not allow the congregation to be imposed upon by false teachers either from within or from without.

Each individual should study these characteristics and strive to develop them as rapidly as possible. When a man has been chosen by the congregation as an overseer, because he has developed these qualifications to a fair degree, he should strive the more earnestly to develop all these qualities. No man can possess them to any measurable degree and not be a power for good. He will have the respect of the community in which he lives. Men will naturally seek him out and ask counsel of him. He cannot help but inspire confidence and enthusiasm.

Some one may be ready to ask, What are you going to do where you do not have any such men in the congregation? *Answer:* Let each one study these qualifications, pray God for strength and help to develop them, and it will not be long before some in the congregation will develop to such a degree that the congregation will be glad to honor them with this the highest office within God's house. Poor indeed is that congregation that has no such men within it, and where none is striving to become such. A congregation cannot long continue where such Christian characters are never developed.

## STEWARSHIP OF THE SHEPHERD

By A. L. DEVENY

CERTAINLY, when David said, "The Lord is my shepherd," he regarded himself as belonging to the Lord. In this case stewardship may be only hinted. In reality the shepherd in the premises was the owner of the sheep (singular number). Where our Lord Jesus Christ is referred to as the "chief shepherd"; "the shepherd and bishop"; "the great shepherd"; and where he refers to himself as "the Good shepherd"; we understand, of course, that he is the owner of the sheep. In this world of sense (as distinguished from the spiritual) shepherds are more usually hirelings and in that capacity are stewards of the flock which belongs to the employer. God has ordained that flocks, represented by congregations of his sheep, shall--each--have a plurality of shepherds. Shepherds (elders) are, therefore, stewards of God. "For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God" (Titus 1:7). In what sense is a bishop a steward of God? Does his stewardship differ from the common stewardship of all members of the body of Christ? The elders are stewards of talents, material blessings, etc., just as is every other member. In addition, God has entrusted to the elders the souls of men and women, boys and girls, who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. Hence the elders, as shepherds, are stewards of souls.

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17). Yes, it is very evident that God holds the elders responsible for the souls that

are entrusted to their care. It is certain that God is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). Specially is he anxious that all who have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered them through the preaching of the gospel should be eternally saved.

Beyond peradventure of doubt the elders are the stewards of redeemed souls and there will surely be a day of accounting. If any souls are lost after entering into the Way, will it be because their shepherds were derelict in the performance of their duties, or any of them?

How kindly, lovingly, and tenderly should the shepherds, therefore, exercise their various functions in dealing with the flock of God!

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#### THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE

*“Thou art the Way, to Thee alone  
From sin and death we flee;  
And he who would the Father seek,  
Must seek Him, Lord, through Thee.*

*“Thou art the Truth, Thy word alone  
True wisdom can impart;  
Thou only canst inform the mind,  
And purify the heart.*

*“Thou art the life: the rending tomb  
Proclaims Thy conquering arm;  
And those who put their trust in Thee  
Nor death nor hell can harm.*

*“Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life;  
Grant us that way to know,  
That truth to keep, that life to win,  
Whose joys eternal flow.”*

—Author unknown

## UPON THE ELDERS EVERYTHING DEPENDS

By E. C. FUQUA

THE ELDERS of God's church are to *FEED* the flock (Acts 20: 28). But it is my conviction, that, in today's churches, the elders (so-called) are rather *STARVING* the flock; for if the members need spiritual oversight—protection from a multitude of dangers—they are left without generally speaking. Consequently, the churches are spiritually weak, for a church cannot rise above its recognized eldership. Indeed, it has no right to even try; for the elders are to set the example to be followed by the church.

There are some exceptions to all rules, I suppose, but the rule is, the elders are more exercised in *RAISING MONEY* for various enterprises (chief of which I believe to be the preacher's salary) than in guarding the flock from surrounding dangers. *The preacher must be clean and spotless*; but the membership need not be so chaste! Nor are the elders to be "above reproach"! They often "take sides" in "church fusses," when they should be neutral, as judges of the rest, enjoying the complete confidence of all the members. But I find that very little confidence is reposed in elders today; they are often more vulnerable than many of the members. That alone disqualifies them for overseeing the membership. They are looked to more for the "qualifications" for directing finances than for feeding the flock on spiritual food.

Consequently, we find in the church all the sins to be found in the world: some members guilty of one, some of another; until it is hard to distinguish the *church* from the *WORLD*. Unpaid debts, covetousness, animosity, pride, immorality, unjustness, and such like sins are largely overlooked by many elders. I have

known flagrant adultery condoned by the elders, because the man was a "good-paying" member, and the woman was socially elite! It is almost a common thing to find in one congregation from one to six couples that were divorced, and remarried, and, generally, with no regard to the SCRIPTURAL RIGHT to be so. Elders wink at such sins. They appear to give most all attention to the task of *raising money* for various schemes, some wise, some otherwise. They seem to know how to *get money out of members*, but know little about how to *get spiritual "meat" and "milk" into them*.

Elders are often selected who have only a few of the qualifications demanded. I know elders who attend the movies, ball games, etc., and who are "tobacco soaks" or "smokehouses" and users of foul language in the presence of their own sex; but they know how to make the members "shell down the corn" in financing various projects for "church work." The latter was NEVER any part of the work of elders in New Testament times. Clean lives and holy hands and spiritual discipline formed their duties then. Under such the church grew.

There is much criticism today of the "sissy" preacher; those men who, to please "their elders," "soft-soap" their preaching; those who seek a reputation by being popular with all members, especially with "the young people." Often such preachers, desiring to put over some sensation, will gather around them prominent young people, until they have a majority formed; then they tell the elders to "fall in line, or get out!" So the thing goes over. The elders are shown to be mere figureheads; the preacher is the overseer in reality.

The churches will never grow in grace until they have elders of the New Testament type. It is almost impossible today to find a man really qualified to be an elder. I know many, and scarcely any are Scriptural overseers. Hence we will find in most of the churches young men and women who have married sectarians and are only partly interested in the Cause of Christ. These are often the very cause of the preacher putting on "the soft pedal" in his teaching; he dare not offend these youngsters who have sinned against God and who consider themselves be-

yond censure for it. The elders, also, not wishing to offend their in-laws, allow the Cause to weep aloud in the community. They are "hirelings" running when the "wolf" appears. But their real business is to see that the preachers "preach the Word," and that the members hear it—"and like it." One's spiritual appetite is formed by the diet fed on. Those who hear only "sound doctrine" will grow up to like it. Those fed on "fables" will come to like that diet. Hence it is imperative that the churches hear only "sound doctrine" whenever preaching is done. The elders are to see to that, otherwise, it will soon be the case when the pure Word of God will not be allowed in any pulpit among churches of Christ.

From the position and responsibility of Scriptural elders, as in the New Testament set forth, they are *wholly responsible* for the condition of both the churches and the preachers now functioning. They *have the right* and are *under command* to see that the churches move onward as Christ has ordained, and also to see that preachers "preach the Word" instead of popular and sensational "sermonettes" so often heard these days. They are responsible to God for every sin condoned in the church, and for the tardiness of the church in spreading the Gospel, and for the quality of preaching delivered in our pulpits. They are God's *overseers*, God's *shepherds*, those who are finally to "give account" to Him for conditions in the church. That "charge" they cannot shift on to the preacher or the members. When we make a practice of recognizing only qualified elders, then—and not till then—will the churches be safe and acceptable to God. The churches need *BRAVE* men, men *NOT AFRAID* of sentiment or of attacking sin in every form. Weaklings are more than a disgrace to the Cause: they are a menace of dreadful mien.

E. C. FUQUA

Thank you Brother Fuqua.

Brother Fuqua mentions various and sundry conditions which can build up into a formidable barrier within our own ranks against the progress of New Testament Christianity.

The elders giving way to preachers who have a nice salary to protect places an enticing temptation before them to "soft soap" or put on "the soft pedal" regarding their preaching which may easily turn the *ministry* into a *merchandising* enterprise instead of a campaign for *saving souls*.

To mention it pessimistically, preachers and elders have, in some parts at least, lapsed into a state of *SPIRITUAL LETHARGY* to the lowering of spiritual activity among the brethren. In a few places elders have attempted to "hamstring" the preacher to hold him to preaching what they and the members want instead of what they need. Having been in the work for over forty years I believe the tendency toward "soft" preaching is greater on the preaching side of the issue. The preacher wants to be popular, wants the compliments of the members, dislikes to preach on those things which condemn the practices of the flock; he is afraid of being criticised, is afraid of sentiment arising against the continuance of his tenure with the congregation. So he adopts the policy of following the course of least resistance, which makes men (preachers), as well as rivers, crooked.

Among other things mentioned by Brother Fuqua he pays respects to "flagrant adultery condoned by the elders." Mrs. Belmont so thoroughly succeeded in her boast that she would make divorces and remarriages popular in the United States that it is hard to find a congregation of the church of Christ, of any size, that is not afflicted with this spiritual *malignancy*... There are both preachers and elders who stand condemned before God for letting this *cancerous* development go unchallenged in the churches. Many members there are living in this type of adultery because they do not know better. Do you remind me that the members should read their Bibles and know what is right and wrong? I agree with every word you say; for if the members would read for themselves they would know much of the truth which is, for obvious reasons, withheld from them by preachers and elders. God, in his wisdom, knew the average member would not read much for himself, and therefore said it

was his “good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (I Corinthians 1:21). And also he charged the elders “to feed the church of the Lord” (Acts 20:28). And set them to “watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account” (Hebrews 13:17).

If the elders are to “watch in behalf of your souls” then the elders are “*watchmen*.” “So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; *If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way*, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; *but his blood will I require at thine hand*. Nevertheless if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; *but thou hast delivered thy soul*” (Ezekiel 33:7-9). *How dreadful a thought!*

Can it be true that elders are unaware of the dreadful consequences with which their position is fraught?

This is a live issue and if preachers would keep the New Testament teaching before the churches, and elders would handle the problem “like men” there would be thousands less divorces and remarriages in the churches of Christ. There is too much arguing done over certain points of qualification, the import of which many seem not to understand, and much too little attention given to the things for which the appointee stands; which within itself is a very important quality; for “holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching” (Titus 1:9), is one of the basic preparations for the eldership.

Disinclination, or a state of being indisposed existing in the elderships of many of the churches, not to handle such flagrant sins as adultery and kindred problems among the members is alarming.

It is an easy matter to find a church carrying fifteen or twenty adulterers with maybe only one elder insisting that something be done; but what can one elder accomplish alone other than to raise a fuss among his fellow elders?

Brethren, negligence in matters under our care which jeopardize the souls of them for whom we must answer is nothing less than playing with "hell fire." What are you going to do about the cases which come within your responsibility?

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6).

"Cursed be he that doeth the work of Jehovah negligently" (Jeremiah 48:10).

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#### A PSALM OF DAVID

*Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle?  
Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?  
He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,  
And speaketh truth in his heart;  
He that slandereth not with his tongue,  
Nor doeth evil to his friend,  
Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor;  
In whose eyes a reprobate is despised,  
But who honoreth them that fear Jehovah;  
He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not;  
He that putteth not out his money to interest,  
Nor taketh reward against the innocent.  
He that doeth these things shall never be moved.*

## WHO ARE THE OVERSEERS?

BY CLAUD B. HOLCOMB

Denton, Texas

TAKE HEED therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account" (Hebrews 13:17).

These two passages set forth obligations belonging to elders and to members of the church in their relations one to another. In all the New Testament, the elders are the only ones who are designated as "overseers." Since the Lord thus designates them, I take it that it is the *duty* of elders to oversee the affairs of the congregation wherein they serve. Any others who try to take the oversight are usurpers, and this includes preachers and deacons. Certain things going on in some congregations today indicate that there are some who have forgotten New Testament teaching in this matter—if they ever learned it.

## REBELLING AGAINST AUTHORITY

There are many Old Testament examples of God's displeasure upon those who became usurpers, or who rebelled against authority that had been appointed by Jehovah. The incident involving Korah, Dathan, and Abiram is a case in point (Numbers 16). Although God's system of government over his people has changed, the principles upon which he executes his law have not changed. This is why Paul said, "These things happened

unto them by way of example; and they are written for our admonition" (I Corinthians 10:11).

In olden times Moses was God's appointed leader over Israel; all who rebelled against his leadership were punished (Numbers 12 and 16). In this dispensation, God has given all authority to his Son, Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18). By the authority of Christ elders are to be appointed in "every church" (Acts 14:23); their duty is to "oversee" (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2), and to "rule over" the flock (Hebrews 13:17; I Timothy 5:17). And who will not accept Christ's appointment in this matter, and will not submit themselves to the oversight of the elders of the congregation with which they are working, are in rebellion against God's way, as were Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. It is hard to get men to see that they are actually rebellious, or at least it is hard to get them to admit it. Many are easily deceived. The prophet said, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry" (I Samuel 15:23). It is a serious matter to act in rebellion against God's ordinances.

#### DISGRUNTLED MEMBERS

Elders who allow the preacher, deacons, or any other to take matters into their own hands and run the affairs of the church are failing in their duties as elders. They should not forget to "watch . . . as they that must give account." If some "pastoring" preacher sets out among the members to work up sentiment against the eldership, they should stop him before he gets started. If deacons start demanding that they be given full charge of certain matters (usually they say the finances) without any "interference" from the elders, they should be taught what their place is in the church.

Peter reminds elders that they are not official dignitaries "being lords over God's heritage," but he also says they are to take "the oversight thereof." The God-given duty of elders, then, is to oversee; and they should muster all courage and boldness necessary to perform their duty. Then when they have done what is best for the church, they should not apologize for it.

Elders will need courage. Even when they lead in a spirit of meekness, they will sometimes be accused by disgruntled members of "lording it over God's heritage." Usually such members are trying to lord it over the elders. Such disgruntled members must not be allowed to discourage the elders from their God-appointed task.

#### "SPIRITUAL" VERSUS "TEMPORAL"

Many times the argument is made that it is the place of elders to oversee the spiritual affairs of the church, and the place of deacons to oversee the temporal affairs. Where in the New Testament are deacons ever charged with the *oversight* of anything? Acts 6 usually comes up here as a supposed argument for "deacon oversight." But those men were "appointed over" (*epi*) a work assigned them, which they performed under the oversight of the apostles, who were then in charge of affairs in the Jerusalem church. Those seven men were not made overseers (*episkopous*).

We know that it was not long until the Jerusalem church had elders (*presbiterous*) who were the overseers (*episkopous*) (Acts 11:30; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23). When money *was* collected for relief of the brethren in Judea, that money was sent to the elders—not the deacons. Certainly the deacons have their work, which we haven't space to discuss here, but they are clearly not overseers as elders are; not even overseers of "temporal" things. They are to submit themselves, as all other members of the congregation should, to the oversight of the elders. The church is a spiritual institution; and every part of its work, whether we label it temporal or otherwise, has to do ultimately with spiritual things.

Preachers and deacons are not hirelings or "yes men" for the elders. Each has his work assigned by the New Testament; and he should not be restrained in performing that work with all the earnestness and zeal of which he is capable. But it is to be done under the oversight of the elders. Neither the preacher nor the deacons can scripturally "take the oversight" of the congregation. That is the task God has assigned to the elders. "Let the

elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching" (1 Timothy 5:17).

NOTE.—The above article is given verbatim as it appeared in *The Gospel Guardian*, Vol. 1, No. 12, July 28, 1949, p. 4.

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### THE INFIDEL'S CHALLENGE

"If I firmly believed, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of Christianity in this life would influence destiny in another world, Christianity would be to me everything.

"I would cast aside earthly cares as follies and earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity. Christianity would be my first waking thought and my last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness.

"I would labor in its cause alone.

"I would take thought for the morrow and eternity alone.

"Earthly consequences should never stay my hands or seal my lips.

"I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a lifetime effort.

"I would go forth to the world and preach Christ in season and out of season, and my text would be: 'What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'

Let us accept this challenge.—Selected.

Gospel Advocate, June 8, 1950

## AN ELDER

I HAVE in my possession a timely article written by Brother John W. Pigg which deals with generalities and with his permission I am submitting it for your thoughtful reading.

These various articles from brethren in different parts of the country, some of them unknown to others, give us, from different angles, views of the eldership.

It will be noted that some of the statements in these articles differ slightly from the author's position; but dogmatism is ruled out by a persistent search for an over-all picture of the eldership. However we have properly, yet lovingly, dealt with all that have been regarded as radical and misleading positions. We are imperfect, fallible men dealing with a perfect standard. Brother Pigg's article follows:

## AN ELDER

JOHN W. PIGG

My conscious effort has been to nourish a wholesome esteem for an elder in the church. The experiences of my life have contributed toward a realization of that ideal. This paper is consequently with deep reverence and profound respect. The occasion arises for ordaining an elder. In the final words of the Hebrew letter a solemn injunction to obey those who have the rule and the supervision over us is written.

It should be one's desire to have and to manifest the highest respect for the men chosen for and charged with the care of the church. One who directs the affairs of the church should have certain characteristics. These traits are listed in letters to Timothy and Titus.

An elder is a man. He is not an angel. He is not a spirit. His excellence and abilities are limited. We should be sympathetic toward his humanity. The scriptural qualifications comprise a flawless person. They are a complete standard for a defective mortal. We in appraising an elder are measuring an imperfect being by a perfect standard. A ruthless pressing of the requirements will eliminate any one whose name may be submitted. We therefore incline to the conclusion that we should assume a compassionate, practical, lenient, working attitude. Of human judgment an answer is expected.

The selection of a husband is a vexing perplexity. The woman who holds out for a perfect mate invites celibacy. Such a partner she cannot find. There are no perfect men. She who marries accepts the hand of an imperfect suitor. Potentates, presidents, professors, physicians, and preachers are pathetically fallible. He who speaks as the oracles of God preaches a certified gospel.

The church needs elders. A man may need a wife most desperately. Men sometimes have a home to keep and children for whom to care. God needs elders to maintain his house and teach his children. The management of the church is laid upon the elders. It is God's will they function. By his grace they can do the work assigned. Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every church. Men were then as now. God's way is workable.

God wishes a work done in which he has a fervent, abiding concern. Men are children of God in Christ. God desires them to be educated and supervised in scriptural worship and righteous living. There are many of these children. Their needs are great, individual, and pressing. God expects men to serve the church in this capacity. He has not asked an impossibility. He has not exacted superhuman attainment for those who serve him. His yoke is easy.

An elder should be blameless. Doves, some angels, and little children are blameless. Jesus was blameless. He sustained his purity under temptations that tarnish men. Jesus was absolutely blameless. Men can be no more than relatively blameless. Moses

was called a faithful man. Yet his unfaithfulness kept him out of the promised land. Moses was faithful as men are faithful. One should be a blameless man to be an elder. Peter was accepted as an elder by the Holy Spirit. Peter was blamed by Paul for withdrawing from the Gentiles after the Jews came to Antioch. Paul spoke of his dissimulation which carried Barnabas away. Peter was indeed a great man. He did a noble work as an elder in the church. He was blameless only relatively. A professional prosecutor could have made a strong case against Peter upon a charge of hypocrisy. Paul's words in Galatians 2 would have been as those of a star witness against him. Notwithstanding Peter was a qualified elder. In a scriptural sense he was blameless.

The responsibility of a husband is in a wise, thrifty, frugal manner to direct the household. One's husbandry should attain a high plain. Failure in husbanding strikes against one's being put in trust with the church. The marital status should be the union of one man to one woman. Divorce could be imposed upon the best man in the membership. Worthy, worth-while men may not qualify as elders.

One who watches for souls should be vigilant. He should readily see the things that threaten the progress of the individual and the peace of the congregation. He should see talents and aptitudes in men and women. He should detect fraud, deceit, and subtlety in imposters. Adam was vigilant. He saw the evil design of the devil. He possessed in an eminent degree one qualification of an elder. So did Simon of Acts 8. One who does not enjoy a keen vision will be handicapped as an elder.

An elder should be sober. He should know the nature and the danger of that which he sees. When he sees a wolf he should know its wickedness. An elder should not suffer himself to be thrown into panic by the trivial things that meet his eyes. He should be steady, calm, cool, temperate, and well-balanced. He should be collected and unimpassioned. He makes decisions in matters that involve the soul.

An elder should be a good example of proper behavior in the

house of the Lord. The general tenor of his life should be serene and dignified. His habits of work should be regular, proficient, and progressive. His domestic life should be tranquil and joyful. A good church attendance record is to his advantage.

An elder should practice hospitality generously. Travelers and strangers should be sheltered and entertained. An elder is host to those who enter the house of God. Upon his cordiality depends the affinity some members make for the church.

An elder should be apt, prepared, disposed, and inclined to teach. The Holy Spirit could not be expected to speak disparagingly of teaching. The Church was built by the Master Teacher. It is promoted by teaching. Teaching is fundamental to its beginning and progress in any given place. Little children, those of mature years, and the aged should be taught those things they especially need.

An elder should not give himself to wine. Wine is a hard master that takes all one has and is. It knows neither reason nor moderation. It enslaves the captive. One who surrenders to wine cannot serve the Lord. It is impossible to serve two masters. Wine holds pain, disappointment, and anguish for its victim.

An elder should not be a striker. He cannot in violence accomplish his work. Nourishing and cherishing are not compatible with fury and anger. Gentleness and kindness become the servant of the Lord. An elder should keep strength and restraint in balance. His work solicits meticulous application of all his resources.

An elder should know the place given to money by the doctrine of Christ. Men are of more value than silver and gold. Finance is of importance because it promotes the Church. The Church holds the eternal interest of the people. Money is a powerful means of serving the Lord. An elder should know a wise stewardship of material things. He should be skilled in making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.

An elder should be patient. Youth is delicate. Flesh is fragile. Jacob was an illustrious shepherd. When Esau sug-

gested they go with dispatch to their destination, Jacob replied that the flocks and herds were in his care. They were tender and with young. One day's overdriving would kill them; Jacob went on softly as they were able to travel until he came to the place. Jacob moved patiently and persistently.

An elder should not be a brawler. Loud, confused speech may stir a mob. It will not properly conduct a church. The quiet, sober, modulated voice of sound doctrine will set the feet of the people on the rock. If one could have in fullness all the qualifications given, he would be a most brilliant man. We eagerly admire the man among us who does the best he can as an elder of the Church."

I further submit some worth-while gleanings from Brother Pigg's writings in the *Firm Foundation* under the caption "Bishops":

### BISHOPS

By JOHN W. PIGG

Among the most holy and laudable aspirations is the desire to be an elder in the church of God. An eager ambition to serve in that capacity is righteous and praiseworthy. One who accords honor and esteem to the elders strengthens the church by making their office the more attractive. A harsh comment concerning one in that position may chill the enthusiasm in a noble person for that scripturally approved employment.

The bishop of the text possesses hidden power. In the momentum of his activities of moral soundness and unbroken integrity he does the bidding of the Lord with skill and dispatch. The shield of righteousness covering the years of his life protects him from the critic and the cynic. Men concur in the acclamation that he is a good man. His vigilance retains him in the service. No deceiver can so completely camouflage sin that he will not detect it. He sees things in their true proportion. He does not confuse mice with men. He does not regard the malignant as trivial. He is sober. One who does not correctly interpret that

which meets his eyes profits little by sight. One must discern the wolf in sheep's clothing to pass the test for the eldership.

This bishop's life is worthy the earnest emulation of those for whom he is responsible. He demonstrates the teaching he advocates. He uses the product he advertizes. He takes the remedy he features in his testimonial. It shows in him the results desired.

The bishop introduced deals with a bountiful hand. Many eat at his ample board. Charity is a cardinal of Christianity with him. He is an exponent of the system.

The bishop depicted is an efficient teacher. He has made thorough preparation and gained an adequate endowment for the significant assignment. His is a natural and sincere force. He stands on two legs. They are clear thinking and concise expression. On them he advances to great attainment. If in either of these one is lame one will limp to a forced landing.

The bishop pictured gives himself to the Lord rather than to wine. Wine is a shrewd, wicked, and unreasonable master. It makes clowns and fools of women and men. One given to wine is consigned to wretchedness. It takes honor, dignity, and character away.

Striking is unbecoming in the bishop portrayed. Care and tenderness are not compatible with blows. The defenseless need protection and assistance. The desire for gain should not dictate the policy of the bishop. Greed is a miserable driver. It should never be permitted to draw the reins over the bishop. Prosperity is good. Hospitality is contingent upon it. The hand of greed should never come upon the store of human food. Greed is selfish. It renders one unfit for leadership.

Patience is a requisite of the bishop set forth. Sufferers come to him. They need sympathy. He ought to carry the weak in his arm like a nursing father. He should walk along with men in the way they are able to journey.

Brawling words do not issue from the bishop of I Timothy 3. They are not like golden apples in a bag transparent. The still small voice did the troubled prophet good. Words that move

men may be gently spoken. Sense is more essential than noise.

The sons and daughters of the bishop before us are the multiplication of his strength. They are capable and worthy accomplishments. They are in position to be an inspiration to other young people of the church. The young are indeed a valuable asset to the bishop. As fire is fought with fire so youth is influenced by youth. They have a sway with their associates which no one else can enjoy.

The approved bishop by educating his own children displayed an ability to lead others to reverence the name of the Lord. One who cannot direct the affairs of his own home would be embarrassed in charge of the church. If the companion involved was a hindrance, she may have broken down the fiber for execution in her husband. He is obliged to stand upon his own record of achievement. There was no alibi submitted that would sustain him.

The immature is seldom able to maintain a modest bearing with the honor of the eldership upon him. He is most likely to become vain. Conceit to be expected. In vanity the beginner mounts to a dangerous height. In the evil hour he falls. It takes time to fit one for the office of bishop.

New members come from the outside. Men are baptized into Christ. The model bishop was favorably known beyond the membership. By his contact with people he was able to draw them to the church of the Lord.

Jesus is our perfect example. We are urged to walk in his steps, think his thoughts, utter his words, and be like him. The bishop has a perfect specimen to follow. We who are not members only should bear with him in his human weakness. We should pray God to do likewise.

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“There is so much good in the worst of us,  
And so much bad in the best of us,  
That it hardly behooves any of us  
to talk about the rest of us.”

Selected

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## WATCHMEN OF SOULS—NOT FINANCES

By HOMER HAILEY

FOR THE PAST several years, elders of the churches have come in for their share of criticism. Some of it has been just, some unjust. Most of this criticism has come from preachers. In all probability if the Lord should say to the preachers, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone," much less would have been said. Nevertheless, it is by open and frank discussion, criticism, and recriticisms that our faults are pointed out and men grow better.

Much of the discussion has pertained to the qualifications of the elders, and probably the greater part of that to only a few of the qualifications. It should be a definite point of conviction with every Christian that an overseer of the church should have every qualification as set forth by Paul in I Timothy and Titus. However, one man may have some qualifications to a greater degree than another; but each must have every qualification to an acceptable degree.

### MORE THAN A GLORIFIED FINANCE COMMITTEE

It appears that the discussion has had more to do with the qualifications than with the really important thing for which appointed: the work. Men appointed to the serious and solemn business of overseers of the church, bought with Christ's blood, are more than a glorified finance committee. Their sphere of service may include that of "watchmen of the Lord's treasury"; but the special commission of the Holy Spirit is: "They watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account." Two points impress the thoughtful: first, "they watch in behalf of souls"; second, "as they that shall give account." There is coming a day

of reckoning when they shall give account of their stewardship.

Nor should it be overlooked that the charge to Christians is, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them." When men have been made overseers by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) and duly appointed by the church to that duty, one rebels against God when he rebels against them. In an age of general anarchy and tendency to ignore duly authorized powers, this point needs stressing. The divine arrangement of church government is to be respected; it cannot with impunity be ignored. Let this principle be recognized by all.

To the Hebrew Christian, the statement, "They watch in behalf of your souls," would immediately call to mind God's charge to Ezekiel: "So thou son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word of my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die, and thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way; that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood shall I require at thy hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, and he turn not from his way; he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezekiel 33:7-9; read also 3:16-21).

#### CASES IN POINT

The duty of the watchman is to warn. This phase of the work seems never to have occurred to so many of the overseers of today. One of the members begins to drift; it is reported that he is drinking; but who warns him of his wickedness, and of the impending danger? Another is beginning to show illicit affection for a woman not his wife; but he is allowed to go his way until his own home is broken up in divorce, and his soul is again enslaved to the devil; but not an elder of the church so much as says one word to either about his condition. This is sufficient to illustrate the point. The reader can multiply cases. Now and then an offender is withdrawn from, but not after repeated warnings. Oh no, usually the thing has just drifted till it so stinks to high heaven that something must be done. But the Lord's

way was not followed; he was not warned to turn from his wicked way. The Lord's watchmen were asleep; their courage was lacking; for a backbone there had been substituted a twine string; it was easier to let the matter drift than to face the reality of duty.

Let the bishops of "The Church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" awaken to the fact that when appointed overseers, it is as watchmen of souls, not merely of finances. There is more to "tending the flock of God" than simply hiring, firing, and paying a preacher, and then deciding where the rest of the money is to be spent. Let the watchmen warn the wicked who go astray, and with a firm hand and in a positive manner discipline them, and there will be less within the church at which to be pointed with scorn by those outside, and there will be a holier disposition on the part of faithful members to overlook the many deficiencies in their qualifications. Their loyalty to duty, and love for the church and its purity will cover a multitude of lesser shortcomings.

#### COMMENTS BY THE AUTHOR

The above article appeared in the September 1, 1949, issue of the *Gospel Guardian*.

Brother Hailey notes that the "really important thing for which appointed; the work" has been placed in the background, and that "much of the discussion has pertained to the qualifications of the elders, and probably the greatest part of that to only a few of the qualifications."

It is really a sad commentary that most of the discussion has centered around about three of the qualities mentioned, namely "The husband of one wife," "having children that believe," and "not a novice."

According to the conviction of the author, much of this discussion is based upon a misunderstanding and a false interpretation of the thought the Holy Spirit had in mind while guiding the hand of the peerless apostle.

The fact that most of the discussion is aside from the teaching

of the Holy Spirit is the point that caused the writer to give so much space in this book to those items, hoping to divert attention from the irrelevant to a discussion and consideration of the pertinency of the apostle's teaching, to the enhancement of the efficiency of the Eldership and the spirituality of the membership of the churches of Christ everywhere.

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### WE SHALL MEET HIM

*"We shall meet Him in the morning  
When the storms of life are o'er  
In the resurrection dawning  
We shall meet on yonder shore.*

*Grief and pain, yea tears and sorrow  
Shall be moved from us afar,  
In the land of God's tomorrow  
Where no sin shall ever mar.*

*We shall meet Him in the morning  
When all clouds have passed away;  
Where the sun is ever shining,  
Where the night is turned to day.*

*In that land there'll be no parting.  
For no death can enter there.  
With the Lord we'll be forever  
And His glory we shall share."*

—Gottfried Stone

## TWENTY-ONE NUMBERED STATEMENTS

Brother Deveny in *The Ordained Elder* issued in June, 1945, gave some thought provoking statements as listed below. Those in full quotation marks are as he wrote them while those without such signs have been reworded by the author. The point upon which he and I differ—that of God and man appointing—as is discussed elsewhere was written into those numbers. I am sure of what I have written instead and think Brother Deveny will agree with the change I have made.

1. In New Testament times there were “elders in every church” and in “every city” (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).
2. “The necessity of a presbytery in every congregation of the First Century is conceded by all Bible students.”
3. “Three men are mentioned in the New Testament as having served in the first presbytery of the Jerusalem church.”
4. “Where elders of any New Testament church are referred to in the Scriptures the implication is that no church was ruled by one elder. (We except Diotrephes who was under divine condemnation cf. III John 9.)”
5. “There is not one instance that can be cited of where any man served two or more congregations, simultaneously, as elder.”
6. The apostle Paul gives more information about elders in the church than all other writers of the New Testament combined.
7. “Nowhere in the New Testament is to be found an abrogation of the divine requirement that every congregation shall have its elders.”

8. Since elders of the church are responsible to God Almighty for the kind of service they render, in watching for the souls under them "as they that must give account" it was a prerogative of God only to specify the quality of the men to be ordained or appointed thus to serve.

9. Inasmuch as God has arranged or appointed that His church on earth shall be overseen by an eldership or a presbytery, and that these overseers are made by the Holy Spirit when men follow his instructions, and that the holy apostles both ordained or appointed elders in the churches and commanded Timothy and Titus to do likewise, I believe this to be the establishment of a precedent for the preachers and churches of Christ to follow all through the last days. Of this action God will approve. And also of the person who has acquired the New Testament qualification.

10. "The Scriptures provide that only men in possession of certain qualifications may be ordained in the presbytery."

11. "According to the Scriptures elders are to serve their congregations as both shepherd and overseer."

12. "In the capacity of shepherd, elders are to lead, feed, and serve as both steward and ensample. (Elders are stewards of souls.)"

13. "In the capacity of bishop or overseer, elders are to exercise authority within the congregation. In the exercise of the authority to rule, the elders' investiture of native qualifications and the degree of Christian character possessed are often put to the severest test."

14. "Both positive and negative qualifications for an elder as laid down in two different passages of Scripture are still in full force and effect, and no man has any authority to alter them."

15. "The Scriptures provide for the selection of good men in and by the members of the congregation; but never by election."

16. "The Scriptures teach that the church is a divine and spiritual institution, and as such it is the projection upon the earth of the Heavenly kingdom."

17. "The Scriptures teach that every individual member of the body of Christ—the church—has an advocate with the divine Father in Jesus Christ our Lord."

18. "The Scriptures teach that every individual congregation of the church ecumenical is to keep contact with the head over all things to the church—even Jesus Christ—through a highly spiritual leadership known as the presbytery which, in order to be effective and operative, must be approved of God in every detail, including personal qualifications, manner of selection by the church, and a spiritual ordination service."

19. "The Scriptures teach that men who serve faithfully and well as elders of their congregations are to receive special reward for so doing."

20. "Whereas the Scriptures teach in both the Old Testament and the New that a proper love and respect must be shown those men who occupy positions of trust, leadership, and authority between first, fleshly and later spiritual, Israel, and the Lord, by every member of the congregation; the Lord has provided that the men in such positions in the congregations shall be worthy of such esteem."

21. Upon the basis of Scriptural teaching, the man who would assume the role which clearly belongs to God and who would dare appoint one or more men to serve as elders in the church without due regard for the qualification God has specified does so without divine authorization or sanction; and such act is sinful.

## EXEGESIS OF FIRST TIMOTHY 5:22

*“Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.”*

**I**N OUR DISCUSSIONS, in the past, on the subject of ordination or appointment of elders the question of imposing the hands has often been raised. Especially is this so when in conversation with them who are opposed to having elders in the churches of Christ since New Testament times. Those men, as well as others, know that no one now, whether he be a preacher, elder, deacon, member, or what have you, is able to impart any kind of a gift by the laying on of hands. And most of the opposers claim that the eldership in New Testament days was inspired and hold to this passage to show that gifts were imparted to the elders, by the hands of Timothy and others, at the time of their ordination.

And to further prove their contention they refer to I Timothy 4:14 how Timothy received a gift through “The hands of the presbytery.” I pay particular attention to I Timothy 4:14 in another chapter and so will not notice it further here.

But we have ever taught that gifts were imparted by the hands of the apostles only. That no recipient of a gift from the apostles was in turn able to impart the gift to another by imposing his hands. From this, therefore, we are forced to the conclusion that there was an apostle in the particular eldership or presbytery which imparted the gift to Timothy.

That I Timothy 5:22 has caused great vacillation of mind in the translators, lexicographers, commentators, and preachers of the New Testament, is known to all. This very condition has kept me steering away from this passage until now. But, that all the other chapters have been prepared I am forced to the task, or else

face the avalanche of questions I will have to answer as to why I omitted this verse from the study. That this verse has reference to Timothy imposing hands in ordaining elders I never have believed.

I am still not sure of the meaning of Paul's language here, only that I am quite confident that it has no connection with appointing elders.

I think my good friend and brother, A. L. Deveny, has made about as sensible approach to the meaning as any of which I know, and so for your benefit I am giving you the advantage of his study.

His comment follows:

"I Timothy 5:1 begins with the injunction to the young evangelist, 'Rebuke not an elder' and this statement is taken to mean, generally, that Timothy should not rebuke a member of the presbytery. Such is not the case at all. Timothy was simply told by Paul that old men in the congregation should not be rebuked. The clause should be rendered 'Rebuke not an old man.' The correctness of this rendering is obvious from the context. In the same sentence are mentioned 'young men,' 'older men,' and 'younger women.'

"'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, specially they that labour in word and doctrine' (I Timothy 5:17). In this excerpt there is no reason to think otherwise than that the apostle had in mind certain members of the elderhood. He was pointing out to Timothy the high position occupied by the elderhood in the church, and was also indicating to him the deference that he should manifest toward them. This thought permeates the 17th, 18th, and 19th verses.

"In the 20th verse a change in thought is introduced in the English version by 'them' the antecedent of which clearly must be any members of the congregation who sin. Nowhere in the writings of the apostle Paul do we find contradiction. The Holy Spirit cannot be charged with making contradictory statements when speaking through any of the earthen vessels employed by the Lord in making his will known to the human race. It is not

to be understood that Timothy was not to rebuke even certain elders in the Ephesian church, who having accepted Gnosticism themselves—were actually teaching it in the church and were drawing away members after them. But conservative explanation of the passage requires that we understand that Timothy's position in that congregation, although temporary, was not, even for the limited time, one of pre-eminence. He was not the pastor of the Ephesian church in any sense. He was not an elder; and being a pastor is contingent upon being an elder.

"That the 22nd verse is difficult for students of the English Bible to understand is freely admitted. Students of the Greek text also are in disagreement over the correct translation of this passage as is very evident from the following: 'Impose not hands lightly upon any man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.'<sup>1</sup> 'Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.'<sup>2</sup> 'Do not lay hands upon anyone hastily; and do not be partaker in the sins of others: keep yourself pure.'<sup>3</sup> 'Never ordain anyone hastily; and take no part in the wrongdoings of others. Keep your life untarnished.'<sup>4</sup> 'Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.'<sup>5</sup> 'Never ordain anyone hastily: do not make yourself responsible for the sins of others; keep your life pure.'<sup>6</sup> 'Never be in a hurry to ordain a presbyter; do not make yourself responsible for the sins of other men—keep your own life pure.'<sup>7</sup>

"These few references suffice to indicate the apparent perplexity of the translators. The Authorized Version renders the second and third clauses of the sentence under consideration, 'neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.' With

<sup>1</sup>Douay Translation; and, A Translation from the Vulgate.

<sup>2</sup>Modern Readers Bible.

<sup>3</sup>Weymouth's New Testament in Modern Speech.

<sup>4</sup>Twentieth Century New Testament.

<sup>5</sup>Authorized Version.

<sup>6</sup>American Standard Revision; and Goodspeed, An American Translation.

<sup>7</sup>James Moffatt, A New Translation of the New Testament.

this rendition—although worded somewhat differently by some—all of the scholars quoted above are in practical agreement. Tradition and not the passage itself has led Christian thinkers, generally, far afield in their understanding of the first clause of the sentence which reads, again quoting the Authorized Version: 'Lay hands suddenly on no man.' As rendered by Douay the passage is too enigmatic to admit of analytical study. Analysis of the other translations quoted above shows a various placing of emphasis. For instance, it is noted that the meaning of the first clause is obscure not alone in Douay (as above noted), but also in the translation from the Vulgate, the Modern Readers Bible, Weymouth, and Authorized Version. It may be conceded that the meaning of the clause is clarified somewhat to those who hold to the opinion that men are ordained to special work in the church by the 'laying on of hands' of other uninspired leaders in the church. However there is a diversity of opinion on even this question.

"Again, it is noted that in an effort to elucidate the meaning of the clause in question the Twentieth Century Version of the New Testament, the American Standard Version, and Goodspeed substitute the word 'ordain' for the expression 'lay hands.' They render the clause which consists of four Greek words, thus: 'Never ordain anyone hastily.' In so far as helping to a better understanding the substitution is of doubtful value. In an effort to sweep aside all doubt as to the meaning of the passage Moffatt makes bold to render it thus: 'Never be in a hurry to ordain a presbyter.' He thus avers that the passage refers to ordination, restricted to the office of elder, and to the necessity of proving a man before he is placed in the elderhood.

"While the Scriptures provide very plainly that a man must be proved before being ordained to the presbytery or elderhood, it certainly is not patent that the passage before us was written for the purpose of stressing that particular point. To explain the clause thus places undue strain upon the context to say the least.

"To interpret the passage as teaching that hands may, might,

could, or should be laid upon the candidate for ordination would seem to this writer to require little less than the mutilation of an otherwise pointed and beautiful injunction. It is true that in a general sense most of the religious bodies of our modern world which call themselves 'Christian' hold to the view that the laying on of hands in the ordination service is necessary to the impartation of spiritual endowments. Just as in Ephesians 4:11, the Greek word for 'shepherd,' a Pauline designation of elders, is rendered by most students of New Testament Greek, 'pastors' doubtless to lend support to the supremacy in matters spiritual within the local congregation of the modern hired preacher system (and this is not intended as a thrust directed against those good men who are employed by elderships to assist them in the work of teaching); even so I Timothy 5:22 is laid hold of as the most likely Scripture with which to raise from the status of theological tradition to the realm of divine sanction, if not of divine command, the long-observed practice of ordaining special servants in the church by 'the laying on of hands.' To make the passage teach that Paul admonished the young uninspired Timothy, who had no power to confer upon others any measure of the Holy Spirit, to go through the otherwise meaningless formality of laying hands upon anyone in the ceremony of ordination calls for more than ordinary credulity. In the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, it is not enough that a service be impressive. It must serve a purpose higher than that for God to be its author.

"Some authorities admit that the verse under consideration may have no reference at all to ordination. One such student, for instance, (Dr. Walter Lock, formerly Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford; *The Standard English Commentary*, IV, 374-78) after dwelling upon the possibility that the passage teaches the care that must be exercised in the selection of the proper persons for ordination to the presbytery to avoid subsequent troubles says, 'Or, more probably, after you have passed judgment, do not be hasty in revoking it and receiving the offender back again into communion.' On the face of it such position is, of course, untenable because no man has

any right to raise obstacles that would hinder a wayward child of God from returning to the fold—the church—for forgiveness.

“May we make bold to offer yet another rendition of this twenty-second verse of I Timothy 5? The interpretation will be self-evident and it will be seen that it does not prejudice any other teaching of the New Testament. We are treating the first clause of the sentence (the Greek sentence) as idiomatic—and susceptible of this easy rendition. We, therefore, propose the following: ‘Accuse no man hastily of sinfulness, neither be partaker of other men’s sins; keep yourself pure.’ The thought would then be simpler, more meaningful, more to the point, and, at once, more faithful to the context. According to this rendition a beautiful and more probable admonition is given to Timothy regarding his conduct in both his public and his private life as a minister of the gospel.

#### ORDINATION OF ELDERS

“Assuming that the foregoing exegesis of I Timothy 5:22 is correct, what follows is in perfect harmony. On the basis of what follows, the reader will have to judge for himself the correctness of what has preceded.

“‘For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee’ (Titus 1:5). In this passage of Scripture the Lord reveals all that he considered necessary upon the subject of how elders are to be ordained in the church.

“Anything that appears to make the procedure followed in ordaining an elder or elders in the church the least bit complicated or ostentatious is, therefore, the result of man’s presumption. There is nothing mysterious connected with the ordination. It was never intended that anything in connection with the work, service, or worship of the church should be ‘done in a corner’ (Acts 26:26). Everything is open and aboveboard, nothing is hidden by divine purpose. Since Titus had not the power to impart any spiritual gift to those who were ordained elders in the various cities of Crete, there could have been no point to his

laying his hands upon any part of the bodies of those ordained, and, in so far as the record reveals, he did not go through any unnecessary motions in performing his duty.

"Truly, all of the twelve apostles and Paul and, doubtless, Barnabas, too, were able to impart spiritual gifts and did impart them through the laying on of hands. Paul was, of course, an apostle extraordinary, and Barnabas, who was Paul's associate in much of his work was himself an apostle according to the account of Luke. See Acts 14:4, 14. That these men and possibly some others, notably James, who was half-brother of our Lord and leading elder of the church in Jerusalem, conferred gifts of the Holy Spirit cannot be doubted; but with the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from active direction in person of the affairs of the church, this power was no longer needed and was, therefore, taken away. For any man or set of men to pretend to impart spiritual endowment to an elder or minister through the imposition of hands to conform to apostolic precedent were an empty sham, the perpetration of a hoax, or an inexcusable manifestation of ignorance.

"That the ordination of elders in the church of Christ should be accomplished with due solemnity is quite apparent. It is no time for flippancy or levity, but rather for earnestness and gravity. After men have been selected according to the rules laid down by him who is 'head over all things to the church' (Ephesians 1:22) for the eldership, the church as a whole having placed its stamp of approval upon them, the congregation in the act of ordination is simply submitting unto God their choice, for approval and appointment. A very important ceremony, indeed, is the ordination service.

"The ordination service, therefore, requires the participation of every member in the congregation in singleness of heart and mind. Those to be ordained are not men who have been selected by a majority vote, but men who have been selected by unanimous assent which is according to the will of God, and hence is well-pleasing unto him.

"With simplicity characterizing the service, the ordination is at once beautiful and edifying to the entire congregation. The

program of the service for the day should provide for the reading of the names of the men who have been selected for the office. Prayers should be offered on behalf of the men chosen to the end that they may faithfully serve the church as elders as long as they may be able so to do; and on behalf of the church that it may ever be ready and willing to follow the leadership of the elders and support them as they strive to do God's will. The scripture lesson of the day should comport with the occasion. Thus 'in the name of the Lord' are men set apart or ordained to serve the congregation as shepherds of the flock. In this manner, the ceremony is both simple and impressive, and in complete harmony with the spirit of the teachings of the Holy Spirit."

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### YULETIDE

*"The snow had begun in the gloaming and busily all the night,  
Had been heaping field and highway with a silence deep and white.  
Every pine and fir and fig tree wore diamond too dear for an earl,  
And the smallest twig on the old elm tree was ridged inch deep with  
pearl."*

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

BY A. L. DEVENY

BROTHER DEVENY has given a list of interesting and helpful questions and answers in his book *The Church and Its Elders* from which I glean a few which might answer the inquiring mind of some reader. Here they are:

1. Before the creation of the physical universe, what was the state of the elements? *Ans.* The elements were in a state of chaos (Genesis 1).
2. What is God's provision against disorder in the physical or material universe? *Ans.* Natural law.
3. What is God's provision against hopeless disorder in human society? *Ans.* Civil governments have been established for the purpose of maintaining order between individuals and groups or nationalities of the human family (Romans 13:1-4).
4. What provision has God made to prevent disorder in the spiritual realm—the church? *Ans.* God has provided each congregation shall be a separate entity before him and that each such congregation shall have over it a plurality of elders to whom he has delegated authority to rule as shepherds and overseers of the flock.
5. Is there a divine plan of church government? *Ans.* Yes.
6. Why is the subject of church government so little understood generally? *Ans.* During the restoration movement of the past more than one hundred years, the group known as the church of Christ has been so busy emphasizing the "first principles of the

oracles of God" (Hebrews 5:12), even to the point of disputations in private and in public debates, that the subject of church government has been permitted, along with other much needed Christian teaching, to remain in obscurity. It is heartening to observe an awakening to the importance of the subject on the part of a few modern Christian thinkers.

7. Is the church of Jesus Christ a democracy or a kingdom? *Ans.* The church of Jesus Christ is a kingdom over which he reigns as king.

8. Is the church of Jesus Christ a limited or an absolute monarchy? *Ans.* The church of Jesus Christ is undeniably an absolute monarchy.

9. Discuss briefly differences between the democratic form of government and an absolute monarchy. *Ans.* Government of the people, by the people, and for the people, succinctly characterizes the democratic form; but in the absolute monarchy, all authority to rule resides in the monarch of the realm and his agents. Amplify, *ad lib.*

10. Can any government exist without recognized leadership? *Ans.* No.

11. What is certain to result where any social, political, or religious group tries to function without an acknowledged leadership? *Ans.* One of two things, viz., assumption of authority by some member of the group who automatically becomes a dictator; or destruction through confusion.

12. Who appointed the first elders? *Ans.* The Holy Spirit appointed the first elders. His work was done through the apostles.

13. When were the first elders appointed? *Ans.* The exact date is unknown; but certainly they were appointed within a very short while (measured by a few months) after the church was established on Pentecost.

14. Were elders or deacons first to be appointed in the mother church? *Ans.* The Holy Spirit has withheld this information.

15. Did the primitive church differentiate between the work of the elders and the work of the deacons? *Ans.* Yes.

16. In so far as the New Testament discloses, apparently how many elders served the Jerusalem church until the conference of A.D. 50? *Ans.* There seems to have been three of them.

17. Who were the three elders of the church in Jerusalem, first appointed? *Ans.* They were James, John, and Peter.

18. Which James was an elder in the Jerusalem congregation? *Ans.* James, half-brother of our Lord, was one of the elders.

19. Who was the leading or ruling elder of the mother church? *Ans.* James was the leading elder of the church. See Acts 12:17.

20. Is there other evidence that the apostle Peter was an elder? *Ans.* Yes. (See Galatians 2:9; I Peter 5:1.)

21. What references indicate that the apostle John was an elder? *Ans.* Galatians 2:9; II John 1; III John 1.

22. In what passage in the New Testament are elders mentioned for the first time as overseers in the church of Christ? *Ans.* Acts 11:29, 30.

23. In what passage are they first mentioned as shepherds of the flock? *Ans.* See Acts 20:28.

24. Were deacons present when Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem for guidance relative to the question of circumcision which was being disputed in the church in Antioch in Syria? *Ans.* If the presence of the deacons may be conceded, it is plain that they had no part in the decision made by the apostles and elders. Read Acts 15:12-21.

25. Is there evidence that Paul selected and ordained elders in the Ephesian church? *Ans.* Yes. Read Acts 20:17-35. Paul spent not months, but years with the Ephesian congregation. His

address delivered to the Ephesian elders at Miletus was delivered to men whom he knew and with whom he worked. Therefore he knew them personally and well. They were men whom he loved and who loved him in return. The evidence admits of no doubt that he was responsible for their selection and ordination to the office of elder as well as for preparing them through patient instruction for the office they held.

26. Name the positive qualifications of an elder according to I Timothy 3:2-7. *Ans.* He must be blameless, husband of one wife, sober minded, hospitable, apt to teach, patient, rule well his own house, having children in subjection with all gravity, of good report, vigilant, of good behavior. Name the negative qualifications. *Ans.* They are: Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, not a novice, not a brawler, not covetous.

27. Name the positive qualifications of an elder according to Titus 1:5-9. *Ans.* They are: He must be blameless, husband of one wife, sober minded, hospitable, able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers, obedient children, children faithful to the Lord, himself faithful to the truth, lover of good men, just, holy, temperate. Name the negative qualifications. *Ans.* Not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, not self-willed.

28. How many qualifications are included in the instructions to Timothy? *Ans.* Seventeen qualifications are included in Paul's instructions to Timothy.

29. How many qualifications are included in Paul's instructions to Titus? *Ans.* There are seventeen qualifications of an elder that are pointed out to Titus.

## QUERIES AND ANSWERS

BY D. LIPSCOMB AND E. G. SEWELL

To give the interested reader the gist of the thoughts and understanding of veterans in the Master's service in these modern times it is the author's pleasure to accompany the foregoing articles of this volume with the combined writings of Brethren David Lipscomb and E. G. Sewell with whom this writer was personally acquainted.

These writings are given in answer to questions received, from various querists over the country, and are taken, by permission, from *Queries and Answers* by Lipscomb and Sewell as edited by M. C. Kurfees 1921 and published by McQuiddy Printing Company, Nashville, Tennessee.

I deem it quite sufficient to give the answers only without the queries, some of which are quite lengthy, for in the answer, not the query, lies the teaching.

These answers are taken from page 194 through 209 by permission from Brother B. C. Goodpasture.

Their writings are given without the usual quotation markings, simply observing their own punctuations as follows:

## ELDERS

The Holy Spirit has described the qualifications of elders in the first letter to Timothy and in that to Titus. None are perfect in their character. So none will have in perfection these qualifications laid down—that is, all will possess them in a human way. In describing such as elders, the Spirit appoints all who possess these qualities to do the work of elders. They will be found doing the work of elders to some extent of themselves, else the qualities

would not all be manifest. The congregation will see these qualities thus manifested. The multitude of the disciples, when a proper work was neglected by the church, were required (Acts 6:3) to "look ye out among you seven men" with the required qualifications.

We suppose in any case where a work was neglected the multitude or body of the disciples would select those among them possessing in a humanly practical degree the prescribed qualifications to do the work. The only work, so far as the Scriptures show, done by the church was to choose those described by the Holy Spirit. In the case of the seven hands were laid on them by the apostles. Whether this was to be done by others than inspired men has always been a question a little difficult for me to decide. Hands were laid upon persons occasionally during the ministry of the apostles. In all cases except two, this one and Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13), it is specifically stated it was done to impart the Holy Spirit or that the Holy Spirit was imparted in doing it. This is not stated in these two cases. Yet the parties in both cases on whom hands were laid did manifest a power to work miracles, of which no account is given previous to the imposition of hands. This truth, together with the consideration that all the other cases were intended to impart spiritual gifts, raises the doubt in my mind if this was not the object in these cases, also, inasmuch as almost every one called to do special duty before the New Testament was given was endowed with a spiritual gift to guide him in that work. If so, laying on of hands was confined to the age and persons possessed of spiritual gifts.

It is very certain, at any rate, that men did discharge all the duties pertaining to the work of the church of God without having hands imposed on them. With this certainty and the doubts as to the matter of imposition of hands, I have never been willing to have laid or to lay on hands. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

I do not think there was any rule or custom regulating how long a church should exist before elders should be appointed. In the Jerusalem church, it seems, the neglect of a proper work

was the occasion of their being set apart. A daily ministration to the widows and the poor was going on before these persons were set apart to attend to the work. This, we take it, was done under the offering of the disciples, excited by the love of the gospel and teachings of the apostles. In that ministration the widows of the Greek-speaking people were neglected. They were strangers, foreigners—spoke a foreign language. They were, doubtless, isolated from the others; and although they were all Jews or proselytes, there was a prejudice against them, and they were neglected in this daily distribution. Then the apostles called the whole multitude of the disciples together, told them of the neglect that had come to their knowledge, told them they could not give time to attend to it, and asked them to select seven men, “full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.” “Full of the Holy Ghost” did not necessarily mean miraculously endowed, but fully under the influence of the teaching of the divine Spirit. *This work* that they were to be set over was the seeing these Grecian widows were not neglected, not the whole distribution that took place to the Hebrew widows. This was already attended to. The Hebrews, as distinct from the Grecians, being at home with their wealth, doubtless gave the principal part of the means distributed. Each one of those selected was Greek, as the names show. Now, the apostles did not take the means from these Hebrews and give to foreigners to distribute among the widows and poor of the Hebrews; but they gave to these Greeks means to distribute among their poor widows, not leaving either class dependent upon foreigners for their support.

The point in all this is, the appointment was made only when the necessities of the case demanded it, and were made only to meet the existing need. So a neglected duty in a church would seem to indicate the time and purpose for which men are appointed to duties. This accords with Titus 1:5: “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting (neglected), and ordain (set in proper place) elders in every city.” It seems Paul had preached there, accord-

ing to the accepted chronology, in 63. Titus, I presume, was with him. He was familiar with the proper development and work of a church. Paul left him that he might wait to see their working, guide them into anything they might neglect, and to properly place the elders in the work to which each was fitted. The letter was written in 65. All the references to the elders and deacons indicate that they were to be men of age and experience—not necessarily old men, but men of established character; men not novices, to have their heads turned with the idea of authority; men in whom the passion and fervor of youth had subsided into sobriety, self-control, gravity, earnestness, and firmness; men of experience and success in guiding their families, well grounded and well established in the truth. While no special age is given, they must have sufficient age to have established their characters in these several different relations to have shown aptitude in training families. I do not understand that a failure to have wife and children disqualified for the work; but as most men have wives and children, they were to be such as had guided them well.

We do not understand there were two orders of elders, but all elders have not the same talent. One may do one kind of work; another, a different one.

D. L.

### ELDERS, THEIR QUALIFICATIONS

Do you mean that your congregation has dispensed with the work that elders should do? That nobody instructs the congregation or looks after the weak members? That you have no rule or discipline in the church? Do you mean that nobody leads in the worship? Nobody asks another to give thanks at the table or to lead in prayer? Nobody urges other members to meet to worship God, or to live honestly, uprightly, deal justly and fairly in the world? If you have given up these things, you have given up being Christians.

(The above questions were asked in consequence of the querist's statement that "our congregation has dispensed with the

eldership in consequence of not having men who possess all of the requirements." The author.)

A people cannot live Christians without doing all the work for one another and the community that God requires. They cannot do this without doing the work of elders and deacons in a community. You cannot live as Christians in a community without looking after the spiritual interests of the church and the public, without helping the poor and the needy, without teaching the ignorant and reproofing the wrongdoers. When this is done, the work of elders is done; and it is much more important that the work of the elders than that the office of elders should be looked after. We often so pervert the religion of Christ that we esteem the office of more importance than the work. This is the world's order of things. It is only in one sense that the word *office* is applicable to the work in the church. It is not used in the church as it is in the government of the world. In this it means that when a man is inducted into office he is authorized to do certain things that it would be a crime for him to do if he were not in this office. Now, in the Scriptures it has no such meaning. The man's becoming an elder authorizes him to perform no act that he was not authorized to do before. It only makes it his business especially to look after the work now. He is to be chosen because he has shown his fitness for the office by doing the work beforehand. This shows it is not an office in the sense of an office of a civil government. But it is a duty imposed, growing out of a fitness developed for the work needed to be done. Any one who does this work of an elder is, in fact, an elder, whether he is appointed to it or not. (? H.E.W.) The appointment gives him confidence and assurance in the work and makes him feel it especially his duty to do the work.

Sometimes men are elected that have no fitness for the work, and others do it who have a natural fitness for it, but are not elected. A church in this condition has two sets of officers—a man-made set and a God-made set. The man-made ones are always a curse and a hindrance to the church. Better not select any if you will not select the God-made ones. These will do

something of the work without appointment from men; and when the work is done, the office is filled. (*But to depend on this system lays the congregation vulnerable to usurpation of authority by unqualified aggressors. And to this scribe's mind is contrary to the will of God as expressed in the New Testament.* H.E.W.)

But our brother says they have none fitted for the work. If so, there are no Christians there. A number cannot live the Christian life and not develop the characters needed to do Christian work. It is frequently said nobody fills this bill, when it is not true. You occasionally find a wicked man who says there is no Christian; and it is just about as hard to find a Christian, according to the faultfinder's standard, as it is to find one fitted for an elder. When the Holy Spirit requires qualifications, he specifies them as they develop themselves and exist among men, not as they exist among angels. The man who expects perfection among men is an impractical visionary. God does not expect it. When he says they must be blameless, he means they are blameless as weak human beings. Abraham was a model of God's men. We form visionary ideas of Abraham's excellence; but when we come to solid facts, he was a weak, erring human. Twice under fear of his life he lied. He occasionally went without God's direction. He and his family suffered for it. I have no doubt we have thousands of Christian men and women who are the equals of Abraham and Sarah in fidelity and trustworthiness before God and man. Peter was not faultless. He prevaricated. I have no doubt our very exacting brethren, had they been in the days of Peter, would have said: "He is not fit to open the doors of the kingdom; he denied the Saviour; he is not fit to teach or be a leading apostle." When the Jews came to Antioch, Peter dissembled and refused to eat with the Gentiles, although God had taught him by a miracle that he must receive and treat them as brethren. Yet God accepted him as the leading apostle. God held him blameless as a man, with human weakness and infirmities, when as an angel he would have been blameworthy. It is not blameworthy for a human being to err

sometimes. It is for him to persist in the wrong. I have no doubt we have thousands of men, probably some in that very church, who are or may be the equals of Peter in firmness and fidelity to truth. Inspiration gave knowledge, but not moral strength. When we dispense with the elders, we dispense with the work of God; and many Christians are in moral character the equals of Peter or Paul or John and James or Abraham or Isaac or Jacob. This faultfinding and depreciation of everybody else usually arises from undue exaltation of self. It is not a healthy state.

The old hypocritical sinner who stands off and carps at everybody in the church as wicked means to say he is very righteous and very perfect. He is usually a self-deceived hypocrite. The same spirit in the church belongs to the self-righteous. It is not healthy to be overmuch righteous nor to demand it of others.

Acknowledge your own and your fellow men's humanity, your liability to err; get clear of the foolish idea that men with faults and human weaknesses are unfitted for the service of God. He adapted his service to and for weak men liable to err. Be willing to confess your faults when you do err. I have noticed it in men, I have noticed it in papers. When one starts out to be over sweet-tempered, to keep out all humanity, it becomes one-sided, unfair, and the bitterest and most intolerant of men and papers. They do not show goodness in an honest, open, human, brave way. A paper that starts out to have no controversies, to be overly peaceable, is as sure to be filled with unjust insinuations and innuendoes as that to-morrow's sun will rise. You cannot crush the humanity out of men. Do not look for perfection in human beings nor dispense with the work of God while pretending to be Christians. When you do the work, you fill all the offices of his servants.

(The above bore no name or initials.)

#### ELDERS, THEIR APPOINTMENT

The trouble with Brother Holt in this whole matter plainly is that appointment to a work in the New Testament involves a

divinely prescribed ceremony or formula; and this whole idea of a formula of appointment has arisen from the idea of office and official authority in the church. Our brother is certainly under the influence of these notions to some extent, or he would not be so earnestly contending for a specific form of appointment. His question above shows that he thinks the appointment of the seven and others was by a specific form commanded of God, given in the New Testament, and that it must not be dropped out of use. If this be true, Brother Holt is right; but the trouble is, he assumes the thing to be proved. That is just the thing I have been calling in question all the time, and the very thing which neither he nor any other brother has proved. The assumption in the matter is that fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands, as mentioned in the New Testament, constitute the formula of appointment or ordination. If we grant the assumption, then the conclusion very easily follows that these things must be done in order to an appointment; but the trouble is that no one has yet made the proof. The word *appoint* is the word especially to be examined, because the word *ordained*, as connected with workers in the church, has been entirely left out of the Revised Version of the New Testament. The word *appoint*, as found in the New Testament, is a translation of at least ten different Greek words, no two of which have precisely the same meaning; while in the Old Testament the word *appoint* is from about twenty different Hebrew words, all with a little different shades of meaning, but all of which were thought in some sense to involve the meaning of the word *appoint*. It may certainly be seen from these facts that the word *appoint* cannot mean a specific formula or ceremony.

I will here give a few examples of the use of the word, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Solomon said to Hiram, in regard to hewing cedar trees for the temple: "And unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint." (1 Kings 5:6.) Instead of the word *appoint* in this passage the Revised Version has the word *say*. In I Kings 11:18 it is said of Pharaoh: "Which gave him a house, and

appointed him victuals, and gave him land." In Daniel 1:5 we have the expression: "And the king appointed them a daily provision of the King's meat, and of the wine which he drank." These may suffice from the Old Testament to show that the word *appoint* involves no specific formula, but simply what certain men said or directed to be done. In the New Testament we have: "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come." (Luke 10:1.) When the apostles were about to appoint another apostle in the place of Judas, "they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen." The word *show* is from the same Greek word that *appoint* is from in Luke 10:1. The Greek word is *anadeiknumi*, and means "to show anything by raising it aloft, as a torch; to display, manifest, show plainly or openly; to mark out, constitute, appoint by some outward sign; and in this case the choice was shown by lot. When the Saviour sent out the seventy, he showed or indicated to them by word whom he wanted to go before him—likely called them by name and told them to go—and that is all the word indicates. It involves no sort of fixed ceremony, but a simple designation as to who should go, and they went. Again: "Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen." (Acts 7:44.) God appointed the tabernacle by telling Moses to make it, and how they should use it; But it was by no fixed formula that God appointed the tabernacle, but simply by speaking and telling Moses what to do regarding it. The Greek word here for *appoint* is *diatasso*, and it is defined: "To arrange, make a precise arrangement, to prescribe, to direct, to charge, to command, to ordain." This word occurs sixteen times in the Greek Testament, but it is rendered *appoint* only four times. It is rendered *command* seven times; *ordain* three times, in the sense of *direct* or *command*; and once *set in order*; and there is not a single instance of the use of this word that admits of a fixed ceremony. One of the occurrences of this

word is: "And we went before to ship, and sailed for Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot." (Acts 20:13.) When Paul appointed that they should take him in at a certain place, it only means he directed or told them what to do. In Acts 28:23 we have this: "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God." This is where they appointed—that is, named, specified—a day for Paul to preach at Rome. This, of course, required nothing more than for them to name or designate a day for him. In Acts 6 the word rendered *appoint* means "to place, set, constitute, appoint; to conduct; to make, render, or cause to be." So the word means set, place, appoint to do this work simply that they assigned the seven men to do the work of serving tables. There arose a necessity for that work to be done, and these men were selected as required and directed to do that work. The prayer and laying on of hands are not involved in the word *appoint*, and were, therefore, for a different purpose. Prayer and fasting are individual acts of devotion to God, and to reduce them to a fixed formula or ceremony is to pervert them and take all the life and meaning out of them. Laying on of hands was always by men miraculously endowed and for miraculous ends, and never an ordinance of the church to be continued after the age of miracles. The word *appoint*, therefore, means to command, to direct, assign, or set, or place a man over, or to do a certain work, as in the case of the seven; but the form of so placing or directing men to do certain work is not laid down, just as the matter of going to the place of assembling on the first day of the week. We are required to go, but not told how we must go; hence we may walk, go on horseback, in a buggy, on the cars, on a wheel, or any way we may choose; but if Brother Holt were to undertake to force all to walk or go on horseback, or in a cart, he would find trouble. So in regard to the matter of appointment. The apostles appointed the seven, and Titus was directed to appoint elders in every city; but no formula of appointment is laid down. To direct, request, assign, place, or set one to do the work needed fills the

bill. Just as well may you require that every one shall walk to the place of meeting on the first day of the week as to require a fixed or specific formula of appointment of workers in the church; and since God has not specified how we shall go to meeting, it would be preposterous and presumptuous to require all to go one particular way. It would be exalting human requirements into the place of divine commands.

Washing the hands is a good and harmless way to keep clean, and about the only successful way to get rid of dirt and filth, and it has always been right, therefore, to wash the hands; but when the Pharisees began to require the Jews to wash their hands at certain specified times and occasions as a religious service, then they made void the commandments of God by their traditions. I think brethren do precisely this very thing when they require or practice any specified formula of appointment in the church.

When men fast and pray and lay hands on as a formula of appointment, they act upon the same principle they would if they were to lay down the law that all the members should walk to the place of meeting on Lord's day. Hence, where the Lord has not laid down the manner of doing a thing, we have no right to lay down any specified form. It is wrong, a matter of rebellion against God, to do so. I would about as soon enter into a demand that all the members of the church should go to meeting one fixed way as to require that the workers in the church should be appointed by fasting, prayer, and laying on of hands.

Now, as no fixed form of appointment has been commanded or laid down in the New Testament, there is no such thing as laying it aside; therefore the principles of the above question do not apply in this matter at all. This is the reason why it is not a matter of importance as to how I do these things. It is true that I have been studying the Bible a long time—about half a century; but in all that time I have not been able to find any formula laid down for appointing men to do work in the church of God, and no one else has been able to show it to me. Any way that a congregation may give an elder to understand they want him to

act as overseer for them is an appointment sufficient. It is the duty of every child of God to read the Scriptures regularly, learn all he can about the work of the church, and do all that he can do, anyhow, and thus grow up into the work; and if a man grows until he can fill the bill as an overseer, and then fails to go on in the work, the congregation should certainly urge upon him to persevere in doing his duty. This would be appointment enough.

As to prayer and fasting, these may be voluntarily done at any time by any Christian who may in a very humble and earnest way implore God's favor. Hands cannot now be laid on by divine authority, as we understand the New Testament. Work, service, earnest devotion to God, is what we need, and no sort of appointing or ordaining service can take its place.

E. G. SEWELL

### ELDERS, MUST THEY AND DEACONS BE MARRIED?

The third chapter of Paul's first letter to Timothy plainly says of both elders and deacons that they must be husbands of one wife. There are differences of opinion as to whether the apostle meant they must really be married or simply meant to teach that they must not have more than one wife. It was customary in those days for men to have more than one wife at the same time, and some think this passage was intended to break that up. But we cannot explain away the fact regarding both elders and deacons that they must be the husbands of one wife. Why not conclude, then, that the passage was intended to accomplish both ends at the same time—that they should each have a wife, but only one? I am sure it is safe to so understand and to so apply the passage to both elders and deacons. But in the Greek, regarding elders, bishops, there is no word for *office*. This has been put in by the translators without a particle of authority for it that I know of. Elders and deacons are necessary workers in the church, but not officers in any sense, but as workers. All authority in the church is through Christ, the great head of the church. But all congregations need well-

informed men to take oversight, to teach the word and see to it that all conduct themselves as the word of God requires. The work of scriptural deacons is also necessary; but they are not officers in any sense further than the work they are required to do.

E. G. SEWELL

We believe an unmarried or childless man, if otherwise qualified, may be a bishop or a deacon. I think where the Scriptures say "the husband of one wife" it means he must have but one wife and be true to her. Then he speaks of his having children. It means, since the rule was to have children, if he has them, he must rule them well. "But if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (I Timothy 3:5.) This shows the end of the wife and children was disciplinary to teach and train the persons for the work of caring for the house of God. Now, if a man gets his training in some other way and shows his fitness of ruling, even though he has no family of his own, shall that church be deprived of his proved talent? DAVID LIPSCOMB

#### ELDERS, THE DUTY OF

We do not know how to make this subject any plainer than the New Testament makes it; and if we tell anything that it does not authorize, we shall tell something that will do harm. The elders are properly the overseers of the congregation, and that would necessarily put them in the lead in searching out all matters of difficulty. But, then, the elders, the overseers, are to do everything of the kind according to the word of God. They are not to do these things by their own wisdom. They must ascertain whether the party or parties under investigation have violated the word of God or not; and if they ascertain that they have, then such party or parties must make amends, must place themselves right, or they should be withdrawn from; and the word of the Lord, not to vote in the church, must decide all these matters.

A brother from Giles County asks whether it is the elder's business to conduct the Lord's-day meetings or not. It is certainly his business to conduct such meetings or to see that it

is done. An overseer must always see that the work is done, either by himself or some one else that is competent,

DAVID LIPSCOMB—E. G. SEWELL

### ELDERS, EVANGELISTS, APPOINTIVE

We are well aware of the fact that some very earnest, good brethren, think it the Scriptural order that evangelists, elders, and deacons should be ordained by fasting, prayer, and laying on of hands. But good men's thinking a thing is so does not always prove it to be. We shall have to see it in the word of the Lord in a light in which we do not now see it before we can accept it as true. The first case in the New Testament relied upon as an example of laying on hands in ordination is the case of the seven in Acts 6. There are some facts in regard to the matter of laying on hands in the New Testament that we need to consider. Early in the ministry of Christ hands began to be laid on people to work miraculous power, as in the case of healing diseases, and one case in pronouncing a blessing upon little children. Christ laid his hands on large numbers and healed them. Later on the apostles laid their hands on people to heal them and also to confer spiritual gifts. But in all that is said in the New Testament preceding the case of the seven there is not one word said about laying hands on men to ordain or to appoint them to any sort of work or office in the church. Nor is it either said or intimated in Acts 6 or any other passage in New Testament times that hands were to be, or ever had been, laid on to ordain men either to office or work. Whence, then, the idea that it ever was done? We can see no origin for it but the assumption of those who claim it. Not only is it a fact that hands were laid on extensively to exercise and to impart miraculous power, but it is a fact that the apostles were the ones that laid hands on the seven, and it is certain they were able to impart and work miraculous power. It is also a matter of fact that Stephen, one of the seven, began working very wonderful miracles immediately after hands were laid on him. Now, since hands were all along laid on for miraculous purposes, and never

one time laid on to ordain people, nor a word said in this case that the laying on of the hands of the apostles was for the purpose of ordaining the seven, who has the right to say hands were laid on to ordain them? We claim no one has a word of authority for any such a thing, and that it is assumption pure and simple for any one to so affirm.

The next case claimed as a case of ordination by the laying on of hands is in Acts 13:1-3. In this case also, as in that of the seven, those who laid hands on Paul and Barnabas were men miraculously endowed. It is also true that Paul began the working of miracles as soon as he started out on his evangelizing tour from Antioch. Hence, all the facts in connection with both these are in perfect harmony with the idea that hands were laid on to impart miraculous power, and not a word to indicate that hands were laid on to ordain them. Nor is there one case in the New Testament that says any such thing was ever done. All the testimony of the word of God is to the effect that hands were laid on in all cases to work or to impart miraculous power and never to ordain men.

E. G. SEWELL

### ELDER, IS THE PREACHER OF A CHURCH ONE?

*Brother Sewell:* Is a preacher a scriptural elder of a congregation by reason of his having received a call to preach for it?

Not unless he possesses scriptural qualifications when he is called. The mere fact that a man is called to preach for a congregation has nothing to do with making him an elder. It takes a number of things to make a scriptural elder. In the first place, the word *elder* means *older*, and is, therefore, a term relating to age and not to office. The word *elder* (*older*) is in the comparative degree. It does not necessarily mean an old man, but it means one older than the ones with whom he is compared. A man must have a good degree of age—of maturity—before he is ready to be a scriptural elder; and yet not every man of mature years is an elder in the New Testament sense of that word. A man must not only have age, but he must have wisdom and dis-

cretion, and must also have Bible knowledge, that he may know how to teach and enforce the word of God; for an elder is not to be a mere figurehead, but must be a man that can not only teach, but can feed the flock with the word of life, and must have a good degree of skill in the matter of influencing the members to do the will of God. He must not be an arbitrary man that will lord it over God's heritage. He must not be a partisan, with partisan views to subserve. His own life must be in harmony with the will of God also. He must be competent to rule his own house in harmony with God's will, or he will not know how to take care of the house of God. Many of the preachers of modern times are very largely destitute of some of these necessary qualifications. Many of them do not keep their own lives in harmony with God's will as written, but rather in harmony with some human opinion to which they are so wedded as to be ready to sacrifice the word of God rather than surrender their own opinions. And, unfortunately for congregations, preachers of this sort are called to congregations to be *pastors*, in the modern acceptation of that term, and at once made elders. They then assume control of things and introduce human inventions, such as humanly devised societies, the organ, festivals, and such like. Then follows a split in the church, some siding with the preacher and glorying in what has been done, while others who have conscientious scruples against such things are driven out in order to worship God and carry on the work of the church as the word of God directs.

Many are the congregations to-day that have been rent in twain that way. And it is quite common for congregations that employ young men to make them elders because they are preachers, and allow them to take the lead and boss things, to find themselves pretty soon in the midst of a big church trouble of some sort and finally in an incurable split. Congregations should be thoroughly on their guard in these matters; and if they employ a young man to preach the gospel to their neighbors and to teach the word of the Lord to the members, then let him devote himself to that work and not assume to boss the congrega-

tion. Let the elders attend to that. There are very few young preachers that are compenent to such a task; and, in fact, there are many older ones that are not. It is altogether out of harmony with the word of God for a congregation to employ a young man as *pastor* and put the management of things into his hands. The *elders*, and not the *youngers*, are God's divinely appointed rulers of his people; and any perversion of this inspired rule brings trouble sooner or later.

There may be congregations where there is no teaching elder and where it becomes necessary to call in some one to teach the word, both to the members and to the world; but, as a rule, he should adhere strictly to that business and not interfere with the control of the church. Young men make good evangelists to bring people into the church; but not many of them are suited to do the work of elders, and should not be put at such work. A preacher that would split a church for the sake of a human opinion is not fit to be either elder or preacher for a congregation, and woe be to the congregation that employs such a man and puts the control of the church into his hands. Such a man and a few thoughtless women can split any church in the land.

### ELDERS, WHISKEY, AND DANCING

1. Can elders in a congregation rent their property for the purpose of selling whisky without violating scriptural authority or bringing into disrepute the church of which they have oversight?
2. Can an elder, as an overseer of a congregation, tolerate dancing by allowing it at his own residence? Does he not cease to be an elder in a scriptural sense?

We have frequently given our conviction of the sinfulness of Christians in any manner becoming partakers in the sins of the saloon. There is not a more degrading influence in society than the saloon. Its work is to degrade and destroy men, to debase and pollute the youth of the land, to beggar women and children, and to despoil women of their virtue and purity and change them

into demons to corrupt and deprave society. Certainly no Christian in any manner should become a partaker in such work. He is commanded to "labor, working with his hands the thing which is good." (Ephesians 4:28.) Here the Christian is restricted in his labor to that which is good. He cannot use his property to promote that which he cannot work to promote. An elder is to be an example to the flock. While things may be borne with in private members, hoping to train and save them from their sins, it is not right to bear with these in a bishop or elder. He is put forward as an approved example of a Christian. A man who is so insensible to the demands of purity and good morals cannot be a scriptural elder. On the same ground, a man who tolerates dancing in his own family or at other places is not fit for an elder. His own sense of propriety ought to teach him not to occupy a representative position when he misrepresents the faith of a great number of the members. Things may be borne with in a private member to save him that could not be tolerated in a representative man.

Paul (I Timothy 3:2) says: "The bishop therefore must be without reproach," or "blameless." No man can be without reproach with all good, true, and prudent men and women who use his property to forward the work of whisky selling or encourage the licentiousness of the dance. "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without." No man who uses property to forward the whisky interest ever had good report of even whisky men. Wicked men have no respect for a Christian who shows a willingness to compromise morality and right for the sake of gain. A man who encourages dancing and jeopardizes the virtue of his daughter is never respected as a religious man by the wicked themselves. Men who rent their houses for the work that degrades men and encourage the dance that demoralizes and destroys the modesty and endangers the virtue of both men and women cannot be elders or bishops in a church governed by the word of God.

DAVID LIPSCOMB

### ELDERS, THEIR JURISDICTION

*Brother Lipscomb:* How far does an elder's jurisdiction extend? In other words, suppose we have a congregation here and meet every Lord's day and a member moves into our midst and meets with us occasionally; do the elders here have jurisdiction over him, even if he refuses to let his name be put on the book commonly called the "church book"? What does it take to make a member of a local congregation?

If a man is a member of the church of Christ, he is such wherever he is or goes. The Bible says not a thing of joining local congregations. Wherever Paul went, he was a member of the church of God there, whether at Ephesus, Troas, Corinth, Jerusalem or Rome. If a Christian comes into a community where there is a church of God, he is a member of that church. He became so when he became a Christian, and wherever he goes he is a member of the church of Christ; and if he fails to do his duty, he ought to be admonished, exhorted, and disciplined.

*One evil word spoken against a man,  
Might make for him a thousand enemies.*

## SCRIPTURE BIBLIOGRAPHY

By A. L. DEVENY

**B**ROTHER Albert Lewis Deveny, B.Sc., D.O. has given us an interesting collection of Scriptures which may prove very helpful in providing us a ready reference in studying the various passages which relate to the eldership and diaconate.

This list appears on pages 221, 222 of his book entitled *The Church and Its Elders*.

By permission I lift his article bodily out of its place and set it in this work just as he left it:

Shepherds in prophecy:  
Jeremiah 3:15

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is referred to by the Holy Spirit as Shepherd or as Shepherd and Bishop:

Hebrews 13:20  
I Peter 2:25; 5:4

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ refers to himself as the Good Shepherd:  
John 10:1-8

Direct references to an elder or to the elderhood:

Acts of Apostles 11:29, 30; 12:17; 14:19-23; 15:2, 4, 6, 12-23, 25, 28; 16:4; 20:17-38; 21:17-26

Romans 12:8

Ephesians 4:11

Philippians 1:1

I Thessalonians 5:12-14

I Timothy 3:1, 2-7; 4:14; 5:17-19

Titus 1:5-9

Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24

James 5:14, 15

I Peter 5:1-3

II John 1

III John 1, 9, 10

Revelation 4:4, 10; 5:5-14; 7:11, 13; 11:16; 19:4

References to elders or to the elderhood by implication:

Acts 15:40, 41

Romans 16:17

I Corinthians 5:4-7; 9:5; 12:28; 14:33, 40

II Corinthians 3:1

Galations 2:9; 6:1

Colossians 2:5

I Thessalonians 3:6, 7

II Thessalonians 1:3, 4; 3:6, 14, 15

Direct references to a deacon, deaconess or to the deaconate:

Acts of Apostles 6:1-6, 7; 21:8, 9

Romans 12:7; 16:1

I Timothy 3:8-13

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## GRATITUDE

*"You may sing of the beauties,  
Of mountain and dale,  
Of the silvery streamlets,  
And flowers of the Vale;*

*But the place most delightful,  
This earth can afford,  
Is the place of devotion,  
The House of the Lord."*

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## PARTIAL DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT TERMS

FOR AS MUCH as the divine writer has taken care to list the works of the flesh which have been translated into our tongue by words which describe to us certain acts or practices of the mind and body and then adds this admonition: "Of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21), a duty of teaching is involved which falls upon the shoulders of some one.

Here then is a list of words which describe practices of the body, the meaning of which many grown members of the church are ignorant.

How then does one know he is not practicing what the words forbid, seeing he knows not the meaning of the terms? Then it is the duty of each one to inform himself as to the meaning of such terms. But that is just the thing which is neglected on the part of the average member. Then the duty reverts back to, and rests on the shoulders of those who have assumed the function of teaching. Ah, with what frightful responsibilities the function of teaching the word of the Lord is fraught.

And as the whole of the work concerning which this book is written converges upon *character* I feel that not to supply a dictionary of the terms employed in describing both the good and evil practices of the individual in fitting him, not only for membership in the church ecumenical, but for the Eldership as well would be a miscarriage of justice. Therefore I have gleaned those words and phrases which I feel are most calculated to baffle the mind of the average person and given them here hoping that I have, in a measure, shifted the responsibility from my

shoulders, and trusting that the reader will also clear himself of the same by ordering his life to conform to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

The reader will note that this brief dictionary is compiled from the following works:

*Greek Dictionary of the New Testament* By James Strong, S.T.D., LL.D.

*Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language*

*Adam Clarke's Commentary of the New Testament*

## DICTIONARY

The elder must be without reproach or blameless.

“Reproach”: 1. A cause or occasion of blame, censure, disgrace, or discredit, or the like incurred. . . . An object of blame, censure, or scorn.

“Blame”: 1. To censure, to express disapprobation of; to find fault with; to reproach; to fix responsibility upon; 2. To bring reproach upon; to blame, to be blamed, or deserving blame; in fault . . . . crime, sin.

“Blameless”: Free from blame or fault.

—Webster

This Christian bishop must be blameless; a person against whom no evil can be proved; one who is everywhere invulnerable; for the word is a metaphor, taken from the case of an expert and skillful pugilist who so defends every part of his body that it is impossible for his antagonist to give one hit. So this Christian bishop is one that has so conducted himself, as to put it out of the reach of any person to prove that he is either unsound in a single article of the Christian faith, or deficient in the fulfillment of any duty incumbent on a Christian. He must be irreprehensible; for how can he reprove that in others which they can reprove in him?—CLARKE

Blamelessness is not only required of the elders and deacons, but is all that can be demanded of anyone and so this quality

is a prerequisite to the development of a Christian character in any life.

1. "Husband of one wife": Restrictive; no adulterer; no polygamist; being joined to only one woman in marriage; as opposed to promiscuous divorcing and remarrying. In a word, be blameless regarding the opposite sex. Only one living wife at a time.

2. "Temperate": Moderate, not excessive; moderate in the indulgence of the natural appetites or passions; as temperate in eating and drinking.

3. "Sober-minded": Temperate or moderate in thought or action; exercising cool, dispassionate reason, serious or subdued in demeanor, solemn; grave; sedate; unpretentious; humble.

4. "Orderly": Conformed to order; in order; regular; as, an orderly course or plan. Observant of order, obedient; quiet; peaceable; not unruly.

5. "Given to hospitality": Kind and generous reception and entertainment of strangers or guests.

—Webster

6. "Apt to teach": Suitable; appropriate; inclined; disposed; given; ready.

7. "No brawler": Brawl: To quarrel noisily; loud; angry; contention; to wrangle; tumult.

—Webster

8. "No striker": A smiter, i.e., pugnacious (quarrelsome), striker. To pound, i.e., to inflict with (calamity); smite.—James Strong

9. "Gentle": Refined in manners; mild; kind; not rough; not harsh or stern; not violent; not disturbing; not stormy.—Webster

10. "Not contentious": Contentious: Given to contention; quarrelsome.—Webster

11. "No lover of money": As opposed to the miser or hoarding type of individuals.

"How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God" (Mark 10:24).

“Nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God” (I Timothy 6:17).

Money is a necessity. Rightly obtained and wisely expended it blesses the righteous.

12. “One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity”: This condition must be maintained in every home where there is issue in order for it to be entitled to be called a Christian home. And he who disregards this duty, depriving his children of the advantages of correct training to which every child is entitled, proves himself unqualified to be an elder in the church because he is not blameless.

13. “Not a novice”: A beginner; one new in a business; one unacquainted or unskilled; one yet in the rudiments.—Webster  
This denotes one without experience.

14. “Good testimony from them that are without”: Every member should so deport himself that the man of the world would look upon him as an example of Christian living and he who does not maintain this high standard would be a hindrance to the cause were he elevated to the eldership. Human reason can see the righteousness of this at a glance.

15. “Not self-willed”: Self-pleasing, i.e., arrogant.—James Strong. Governed by one’s own will; not yielding to the wishes of others; obstinate.—Webster

Self-sufficient; presuming on themselves; following their own opinions, which no authority can induce them to relinquish.—Clarke

16. “Not soon angry”: James 1:19, “But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” Paul, in Ephesians 4:26.

17. “Lover of good:” He who loves not the good will not be good, will not lead a good, wholesome, and influential life. David said of Ahimaaz: “He is a good man.” While man may be good only relatively speaking, yet the elders must exemplify a high standard of morals in his race for the crown.

18. "Just": Innocent, holy, meet, right.—James Strong
19. "Holy": Which denotes formal consecration; which relates to purity from defilement, i.e., hallowed.—James Strong
20. "Self-controlled": Control of one's self; restraint exercised over one's self; self-command.—James Strong
- Conformed to the truth of things, or to a proper standard; reasonable.
21. "Holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching": "Holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers."

"Holding fast the faithful word": "Conscientiously retaining, and zealously maintaining, the true Christian doctrine, according to the instructions, or according to the institutions, form of sound doctrine, of confession of faith, which I have delivered to thee."

"That he may be able by sound doctrine": If the doctrine is not sound, vain is the profession of it, and vain its influence. It is good to be zealously affected in a good thing; but zeal for what is not of God will do no good to the souls of men, howsoever sincere that zeal may be.

"To exhort": them to hold the faith, that they may persevere.

"And to convince": (convict R.V.) Refute the objections, confound the sophistry, and convert the gainsayers; and thus defend the truth.—Adam Clarke

### DEACONS

1. "Must be grave"; Venerable, i.e., honorable; honest.—James Strong

Serious consideration or thought; important; weighty; dignified demeanor.—Webster

2. "Not double-tongued": equivocal, i.e., telling a different story.—James Strong

Speaking one thing to one person, and another thing to another, on the same subject. This is hypocrisy and deceit. This

word might also be translated liars.—Adam Clarke

3. “Not given to much wine”: Wine is a hard master. It drives a hard bargain. The use of it does not comport favorably with gravity.

4. “Not greedy of filthy lucre”: “Greedy”: covetousness. “Filthy”: Dishonest; shameful; base.—James Strong

“Lucre”: Gain in money or goods; profit; riches. Greedy in getting money dishonestly.

5. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience; “Great is the mystery of godliness” (I Timothy 3:16). We are to “walk by faith, not by sight.” And this faith is to be held in a pure conscience; firmly or thoroughly sold on the Religion of Christ if we would “Have a conscience void of offense toward God and men always.”

6. “Let Deacons be husbands of one wife”: See comment (1) under elders.

7. “Ruling their children and their own houses well”: See comment (12) under elders.

#### DEACONESSES

1. “Must be grave”: Venerable, i.e., honorable; honest.”—James Strong. “Serious consideration or thought; important; weighty; dignified demeanor.”

2. “Not slanderers”: A traducer; Satan, false accuser, devil, slanderer.—James Strong. “To traduce”; To expose wrongfully to contempt or shame; to villify; defame. “Slanderer”: one who utters or spreads a false tale or report maliciously tending to injure the reputation of others.—Webster

3. “Temperate”: Moderate, not excessive. Moderate in the indulgence of the natural appetites or passions as, temperate in eating and drinking.”—Webster

4. “Faithful in all things”: See comment (21) under elders.

Here is a list of terms describing practices of the mass of humanity, in which all Christians are forbidden to walk:

ROMANS 1:29, 30

“Covetousness”: The intense love or lust for gain; the determination to be rich; the principle of a dissatisfied and discontented soul.—Clarke

“Maliciousness”: Malice, ill-will; what is radically and essentially vicious.—Clarke

“Full of envy”: To wither, decay, consume, pine away, etc.; pain felt and malignity conceived at the sight of excellence or at the sight of happiness in another.—Clarke

“Malignity”: Evil, and a custom; bad custom, founded on corrupt sentiment, producing evil habits. Supported by general usage. It is generally interpreted, a malignity of mind, which leads its possessor to put the worst construction on every action; ascribing to the best deeds the worst motives.—Clarke

“Backbiters”: I speak against; those who speak against others; false accusers, slanderers.—Clarke

“Despiteful”: To treat with injurious insolence; stormy, boisterous; abusing both the characters and persons of those over whom they can have any power.—Clarke. The R.V. uses the word “insolent.”

“Insolent”: Haughty and contemptuous or brutal in behavior or language; overbearing; grossly disrespectful; saucy; as, an insolent master; an insolent servant; . . . . insulting; as; insolent words or behavior. *Syn.* Overbearing, insulting, abusive, oppressive, impudent, impudent, pert, saucy, rude.—Webster

“Proud” (haughty, R.V.): Above or over, I show or shine. They who are continually exalting themselves and depressing others; magnifying themselves at the expense of their neighbors; and wishing all men to receive their sayings as oracles.—Clarke

“Boastful”: To assume; self-assuming, vain-glorious, and arrogant men.—Clarke

The definitions of these words from Galatians are from James Strong and Webster combined.

#### WORKS OF THE FLESH DEFINED: Galatians 5:19-21

1. “Fornication”:—*por-ni“ah*; Harlotry, adultery. Fornication, is used, in the Bible to include all sexual intercourse except be-

tween husband and wife.—Webster

2. “Uncleanness”:—*ak-ath-ar-see’-ah*; impurity, physical or moral; uncleanness. “Not clean; foul; dirty; filthy; morally impure; unchaste.”

3. “Lasciviousness”:—*as-elg’-i-a*; licentiousness (sometimes including other vices); wantonness; Wanton; lewd lustful.

“Licentious”: Lawless; immoral; unchastity.

4. “Idolatry”:—*i-do-lol-at-ri’-ah*; Image-worship; worship of idols, images, or anything not God; excessive attachment or veneration for anything; respect or love which borders on adoration.

5. “Sorcery”:—*far-mak-i’-ah*; magic, witchcraft. The use of power gained from the assistance or control of evil spirits, especially, for divining; divination by black magic; necromancy; witchcraft.

6. “Enmities”:—*ekh’-thrah*; hostility, opposition, hatred. “Quality or state of being hostile; unfriendly disposition; hatred or ill will.”

7. “Strife”:—*er-ith-i’-ah*; faction; contention. Altercation; violent contention; conflict; fight.

8. “Jealousies”: Doubtful; distrustful; suspicious; resentment, arising from fear or mistrust of another; painful apprehension of rivalship in cases nearly affecting one’s happiness.

9. “Wraths”:—*thoo-mos’*; passion, fierceness, indignation. “Violent anger; deep and determined indignation—rage; fury; ire; extreme passion.”

10. “Factions”: A party, or clique within a state, government, .... or other association.

11. “Divisions”: Difference; dissension; discord; variance; alienation.

12. “Parties”: A number of persons opposed to the rest; a body of partisans.

“Partisan”: “Adherent to a party or faction; esp., having the

character of blind or unreasonable adherence to a party; as, blinded by a partisan zeal."

13. "Envyings":—*fthon'-os*; ill-will, jealousy. "Malicious grudging; to be envious of, arising from the sight of another's excellence or good fortune and a longing to possess it, to begrudge."

14. "Drunkenness":—*meth'ay*; an intoxicant, i.e., intoxication.

"Drunkard": One who habitually drinks strong liquors immoderately; one whose habit it is to get drunk; a toper; a sot.

15. "Revelings":—*ka'-mos*, a carousal, reveling, rioting. "To be festive in a riotous or noisy manner; to indulge or take part in a revel or revels, as, he reveled in crime. Riotous or noisy festivity or merrymaking; a festive occasion or celebration characterized by lively and jollity or merrymaking; a carousal."

## II PETER 2:10

"Despise government" (despise dominion, R.V.): They brave the power and authority of the civil magistrate, practising their abominations so as to keep out of the reach of the letter of the law; and they speak evil of dignities. They blaspheme civil government, they abhor the restraints laid upon men by the laws, and would wish all governments destroyed that they might live as they list.—Clarke

"Presumptuous" (daring, R.V.): Full of presumption; presuming; overconfident or venturesome; overbold; . . . . taking liberties unduly, etc. "Presumption": Act of venturing beyond due bounds; an overstepping . . . . forward, over confident, . . . . act of presuming; . . . . taking for granted.—Webster

See Psalm 19:13; I Corinthians 4:6; II John 9.

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"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins* let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."

—Psalms 19:13. A.V.

## ORDAIN OR APPOINT—WHICH?

Austin, Texas  
March 18, 1949

R. B. SWEET  
 J. B. WHITE  
 MAX WATSON  
 MRS. J. L. WATSON  
 H. E. HARVEY  
 LUKE ROBINSON  
 O. P. SCHOOLFIELD  
 CECIL CHILD  
 RAY B. CHILD

C. H. HOKER  
 L. A. VANDYGRIFF  
 W. FRANK ADAMS  
 L. C. JACKSON  
 M. M. BALAGIA  
 A. ROY THOMAS  
 WORTH COTTINGHAM  
 MRS. FRANK CALDWELL  
 MRS. J. W. GRIGGS

EUGENE S. SMITH  
 JAMES A. DEVENY  
 CLINDA F. KELLY  
 HERBERT E. WINKLER  
 ESTHER LEWIS  
 ROBERT L. DEVENY  
 RUTH HORNBUCKLE  
 JOHN B. CAMPBELL  
 EDWIN R. DEVENY

*Brethren:*

Quite aside from an apparent tendency to regard the words "ordain" and "appoint" as synonyms in secular usage as noted by the lexicographer, the fact remains that in the higher, nobler, spiritual sense, the meaning of the one is as far removed from the meaning of the other as the East is from the West.

In purely temporal organizations involving human beings, men or women may be nominated, elected, and in turn either installed or appointed in harmony with by-laws appertaining thereto in the post indicated. In institutions of this character, there can be no valid objection raised against the procedure outlined.

Such procedure, however, is not to be countenanced in the spiritual institution known as the church of God—the church of Christ—which is composed of the spirits of the redeemed from past sins; and which, because of its spiritual nature, is in no sense temporal. The selection and the ordination of Scripturally qualified men for the office of elder must of necessity be accomplished in obedience to divine precedent.

Moreover, in the light of the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning the Headship of Jesus Christ over His church, and concerning the selection of men Scripturally qualified to serve as elders of the flock of God; and further, concerning their being set up, set apart, for such special service in the congregation, we insist that the blackest, most ignorant, pagan Hot-tentot in darkest Africa has as much authority delegated to him by the God of Heaven to appoint such men over a congregation as has the purest, wisest,

humblest, most blameless and most righteous saint in the church ecumenical—and this applies with equal force to any evangelist who feels that he can act for God Almighty in this most important and sacred transaction.

The Hottentot conceivably might escape with little or no punishment; but the punishment of the latter will be such as will correspond with that meted out to Nadab and Abihu, Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and all their company, Uzzah as well as Uzziah, and the fifty thousand and seventy men of Bethshemesh, all of whom perished miserably because of presumptuous sin. Can we afford to continue doing that which is an offense in the eyes of a merciful Heavenly Father? Can we longer condone such practice upon the part of any man within the congregation with which we worship? It is high time that something should be done about it!! This is your challenge.

Yours for obedience to our King,

ALBERT L. DEVENY

Nashville, Tennessee

March 21, 1949

Mr. Albert L. Deveny  
Austin, Texas

*Dear Brother:*

Your very recent communication of the 18 inst., came duly to hand. From the list of twenty-seven names, including my own, at the head of the writing, together with the tenor of the article, I gather that you have listed these names as designating individuals at variance with your position on the meaning, scope, and connection of the words "ordain" and "appoint."

You make a strong assertion in the first paragraph about which I am much concerned, and I quote: "Quite aside from an apparent tendency to regard the words 'ordain' and 'appoint' as synonyms in secular usage as noted by the lexicographer, the fact remains that in a higher, nobler, spiritual sense, the meaning of the one is as far removed from the meaning of the other as the East is from the West."

I note that you recognize the lexicographer as using the two terms as synonyms and then state that "the fact remains that in the higher, nobler, spiritual sense, the meaning of the one is as far removed from the meaning of the other as the East is from the West."

You will, no doubt, recall that on March 8, 1947, I wrote you, laying before you my plans for bringing out an extensive study of the organization of the New Testament Church. And knowing your position on "ordain" and "appoint" I earnestly requested that you write an article, for the prospectus setting forth your arguments and giving the reason for your conclusion. To that request, I had a long, but good, article from you on the exaltation and glorification of the New Testament Church, without one single labored effort to prove that man can only "ordain" elders in the church and that the "appointing" is a prerogative of God only.

After getting your answer I continued my writing and took pains to give your position lengthly consideration. Then after finishing four chapters on "Ordination or Appointment of Elders" the larger portion of which was an examination of your position I bundled the whole thing up and sent it to you for your consideration and reply.

The only reply I then had made no labored effort to break down my argument as being unreasonable nor my conclusions as being untenable.

Now you send me this article pointing out your idea of my position on "appointing" elders in the churches as of such presumption as meriting or requiring God's most severe anathema and close the article with "This is your Challenge."

I certainly am trying not to go into print with something that will both hinder the Cause of Christ and bring down the wrath of God upon my head. And so, I am asking you again to give me the reason or the arguments upon which you base your conclusion.

This is not a minor problem with which we are dealing so come to the fore with whatever proof you have against my belief for I would much rather be safe than sorry.

I eagerly await your response.

Very truly yours for knowledge,

HERBERT E. WINKLER

Austin, Texas  
March 26, 1949

Mr. Herbert E. Winkler  
Nashville, Tennessee

*Dear Brother Winkler:*

I am in receipt of a carbon copy of your letter to me of March 21st and I want to assure you my appreciation. Specially do I appreciate your not mincing any words with me in the premises, and, after a fashion you went after me without gloves. I won't say that you hurt me by the way you wrote, it is hardly that. But I do say that you simply do not understand me; and vice versa, upon the subject before us. I am not accusing you of anything at all, Brother Winkler. If there are any others in the church who have been studying this question concerning elders in the church for as long as you and I have, I do not know who it is. I am sure that you will agree with me in the statement that both of us understand the matter very far better today than we did ten or even five years ago; and if we are fortunate in being able to live another ten or twenty years in which we can study and meditate, our understanding of the present will, no doubt, be modified somewhat. I freely confess that I do not know nearly as much as I wish I knew about "The Church and Its Elders."

My dear Brother Winkler, you and I have exchanged quite a number of letters in times past having to do with elders. I have enjoyed this ex-

change but I have not been in agreement with you; i.e., in so far as I understand you with reference to the appointment (?) of elders in the congregation. I have not, however, belaboured you of ignorance, of unreasonableness, or of holding views that are untenable. I have endeavored to be both charitable and tolerant towards you. Maybe I have neglected an opportunity, but it is not too late—even now—to rectify.

The letter that I sent you last week expresses, as far as it goes, my best understanding and, I believe, I shall be adjudged as absolutely correct in the matter, by Him who is “destined to be Judge of quick and dead” (Acts 10:42). At the head of the letter in question are the names of six of my children who, I assure you, are not at variance with me. I just thought, as a courtesy, I would include your name in the list. I only ran off about forty copies of the letter.

I have just completed a thesis this week which may be said to be in substantiation of the claims set forth in my letter of the 18th inst. I am having only 40 copies of it made and I intend to send you one sometime next week, perhaps as early as Wednesday. This new article heads up as follows:

**A NEW APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF A HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL,  
BUT A MOST VITAL SPIRITUAL PROBLEM IN THE CHURCH—  
LEADING TO BETTER UNDERSTANDING**

*The Significance of the Word “Ordain” as Used in the New Testament* and I hope you will find it answers several of your questions in the light of truth.

Yours in Christ,

A. L. DEVENY

Nashville, Tennessee  
March 30, 1949

Mr. John L. Rainey  
Nashville, Tennessee

*Dear Brother Rainey:*

There is a teaching on the Ordination or Appointment of elders in the church of Christ as I present below:

That there is this distinction to be made: The “ordain” is a function of man while “appoint” is a function of God only.

To state it another way, man may ordain elders in the church but it is a prerogative of God only to appoint them.

Will you be bothered enough to take the pains to inform me whether there are uses made of the two terms in the New Testament Greek warranting such a conclusion?

Please be advised that I wish to quote the information obtained from you in response to this inquiry in my forth-coming book on *The Eldership*.

Desiring to be favored with an immediate reply to this inquiry I wish to forever remain,

Faithfully yours,

H. E. WINKLER

3904 Granny White Pike  
Nashville 4, Tennessee  
April 6, 1949

Mr. H. E. Winkler  
Nashville, Tennessee

*Dear Brother Winkler:*

Your letter of March 30, 1949, has been received and contents noted. You say: "There is a teaching on ordination or appointment of elders in the Church of Christ as I present below:

"That there is this distinction to be made: The 'ordain' is a function of man while 'appoint' is a function of God only. To state it another way, man may ordain elders in the church but it is a prerogative of God only to appoint them. Will you be bothered enough to take the pains to inform me whether there are uses made of the two terms in the new Testament Greek warranting such a conclusion?"

In reply I will say I am glad to help you any way I can do so.

Titus 1:5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and *ordain* elders in every city, as I appointed thee" (A.V.).

On this verse Adam Clarke, the prince of commentators, comments as follows: *Ordain* elders in every city . . . . That thou mightest *appoint*, elders.

Acts 14:23: And when they had *ordained* them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed (A.V.).

I shall now quote the above verses from the American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible, Copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson and Sons:

Titus 1:5: For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and *appoint* elders in every city, as I gave thee charge;

Acts 14:23: And when they had *appointed* for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they had believed.

Note that the Authorized, or King James, version in the above has the word "ordain," whereas the American Standard version has the word *appointed*.

In the preface of the American Standard version we find this sentence: ". . . . accordingly when he (the reader) remembers that by the rule of the revisers, it will become evident to him that a rendering given in procedure which the committee followed, the translation of 1611 held its

place in every instance until an alteration commanded the votes of *two-thirds* of the revisers, it will become evident to him that a rendering given in the margin may have commended itself to a majority, while still falling short of the degree of approval necessary to enable it to support the text."

There were one hundred one scholars who translated the American Standard version. It will be noted then that it would take sixty-seven scholars to change the wording from "*ordain*" to the word "*appoint*."

Titus 1:5—καταστήσης (from καθίστημι) is used, meaning (Thayer) b. τινά to appoint one to administer to an office.

Acts 14:23 χειροτονήσαντες (from χειρο-τονέω) is used; meaning (Thayer) c. with the loss of the notion of extending the hand, to elect, appoint, create: τινά (Acts 14:23).

I find nothing in the Greek to bear out the idea that "The '*ordain*' is a function of man while '*appoint*' is a function of God only."

Sincerely yours in the one faith,

JNO. L. RAINY

P.S. Use the above as you see fit. If you desire to make changes of this material in any way, I want you to feel free to do so.

Sincerely,

JNO. L. RAINY.

#### COMMENT

We have been preaching all over the country that The American Standard version of the New Testament was prepared by one hundred one of the ripest scholars of modern times and that they had advantage over the translators of the King James version of 1611, by the possession of some three hundred ancient manuscripts the advantage of which the King James translators were denied; and therefore, we conclude that the American Standard is a better translation. And so we have over two-thirds of the best scholars stating that "*appoint*" is really the better term to use of men "*ordaining*" or "*appointing*" elders in the church.

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## AN INTERESTING BUT POINTED EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE

Austin, Texas  
June 7, 1949

Mr. Herbert E. Winkler  
Nashville, Tennessee

*Dear Brother Winkler:*

I have your letter of June 2, 1949, which I appreciate. I note that you never received the thesis which I promised you in a letter written on March 26. I regret this very much but am at a loss to understand why you did not receive it because I had only a limited number of copies mimeographed and your copy was put in the mail on March 28 or March 29. I have but one copy left and cannot let it go out of my office. Should I be able to get a copy from one of my friends here I shall send it to you.

I am surprised that you have any feeling that you are being "opposed" by me or anyone else. I freely admit that there exists what seems to be irreconcilable differences in our conclusions, but I am not conscious of actually opposing you or what you are doing. I am sorry, however, that you seem so determined to spend so much time and space upon the idea that God Almighty has delegated to any man or any set of men the prerogative of acting in His stead in the matter of placing a man or men in position of authority and leadership in a congregation of His saints. You are just as wrong in that as can be; and plenty of people there are who are anxious to do what the Lord requires who will be led astray by your teaching. I say I am sorry; but even if I could prevent your doing what is in your heart I should not do so because I believe in free speech and a free press and a free exchange of ideas. Hence, I want to ask that you not refer to me as one of your opposers if indeed you have such.

I have no objection to your freely using in your book any material of mine that has fallen into your hands. I presume that your desire to use it comports with your desire for truth and better understanding.

Fraternally,

A. L. DEVENY

Nashville, Tennessee  
June 15, 1949

Dear Brother Deveny:

Your letter of June 7 has just reached me. The mail addressed to me in care of this company for which I work often lays around at the office many days before I get it. All my bills, etc., are supposed to come to my home to avoid such delay. I am sorry the "thesis" has not reached me. I will search for it to see if it has been laid aside at home or at the office.

I did not mean to refer to you as one trying to prevent me from accomplishing my purpose. Having engaged in quite a few oral debates, I formed a custom of referring to the other party in the discussion as my opponent.

I am indeed sorry there exists *any* difference between you and me. I have admired the humble way in which you have approached the entire subject. We must be humble and of a contrite spirit to get up yonder and would that all the brethren could get the idea.

Brother Deveny, the reason I am determined to spend so much time and space upon the terms "ordain" and "appoint" is twofold: First, I want to be right in my teaching and I wanted to fathom this idea and teach it if correct. Second, I have run into so many theories on the Eldership question, I started out to notice all theories that come to my notice and try to retard their evil influence.

I am glad to quote some valuable material from your writings and I hope my disposition of this, our main issue of controversy, will not be in any way offensive to you.

Somehow, the more we exchange letters my love and respect for you grows.

You wrote as follows: "You are just as wrong in that as can be; and plenty of people there are who are anxious to do what the Lord requires who will be led astray by your teaching." I fear this very thing. And so I have stated that I am afraid to teach on the "Eldership" and I am afraid not to. And if I knew it would please the Lord I would stop right here and never speak or write on it again.

But being conscious, as you and I are, of the dire need of teaching on a Scriptural Elderhood I am afraid to hold my peace.

I have *striven* with the Lord in prayer that, if I am wrong in any of my teaching and His Church will suffer if I succeed, He might defeat me.

That He can do, and I believe that He, knowing the earnestness of my request, will do that very thing. And so if I am permitted to carry through, I will receive it as a token of His approval. I hope you will not regard this as fanatical. Pray for me. Please excuse the haste, for it is late and I had a very short night.

very truly yours,

H. E. WINKLER

Austin, Texas  
June 20, 1949

Mr. H. E. Winkler  
Charlotte Road, Route Two  
Nashville, Tennessee

Dear Brother Winkler:

Your good letter of June 15th to hand. I appreciate it very much.

Yesterday I spent some time at my desk copying the thesis for you which has been for several weeks mentioned in correspondence between us.

I regret very much that the copy which was sent you on or about March 29, 1949, failed to reach you. I am glad, however, to be able to furnish you, herewith, an authentic copy of the same for your perusal and appraisal. In as much as it is as yet a part of my unpublished manuscript, I wish you would refer to it in that way in case you find that you can make use of it in your forthcoming book. Also, I want to ask that you quote the whole of the subject matter if you use any of it at all for only in that way will it be possible for my position to be understood by your readers. This request applies only to this thesis and for the reason suggested.

Your very kindly attitude towards me is very much appreciated and, I can assure you, you have earned for yourself a very lofty position in my esteem.

I would not claim more for myself than I am willing to cede you. I am sure it is not your desire nor your intention knowingly to promulgate doctrine regarding elders in the church which is at variance with divine revelation as you understand it. Furthermore, it is evident to me that in spite of the great amount of study of the Scriptures which you have made, the meditation and prayer applied thereto, you have sought earnestly the results of the study of other seekers after truth upon the same great and long-neglected subject whether they are in agreement with you or not.

Accepting as a criterion of Almighty God's approval of your present work of faith and labour of love, the probable fact evidenced by your ability to get your work on *The Eldership* published may be faulty; but I certainly would not regard you fanatical in so accepting it. I know what you mean. I know how earnestly you crave some evidence of positive assurance from Him in whom we live, move, and have our being, that what we are doing and the manner in which we may be doing it is to Him acceptable. Hence, no one at all erudite in the teachings of the Scriptures could reasonably deny you the privilege of such criterion.

Hoping this thesis may be of some little value to you in your avowed search for truth, and with very best regards, and may the Dear Lord use you as one of the great teachers in the church to further a better understanding of His will among the people who constitute Spiritual Israel, I am

Your brother in Christ—our Lord,

A. L. DEVENY

The thesis to which reference is made above is an article prepared by Brother Deveny with the express purpose of showing or proving by the Scriptures that man or the congregation of the Church can only "ordain" elders; and that it is a prerogative of God only to "appoint" them.

The article contains about 3500 words and I am honest when I say that the material is no more convincing than other writings of his which I have quoted for your considerations and as I am asked not to quote him in part I shall not betray the confidence he holds toward me.

But inasmuch as Brother Deveny states in one of his letters to me as given above that I am just as wrong in that as can be; and that "plenty of people . . . who will be led astray" by my teaching, I wish to quote two paragraphs from a letter he addressed to me October 2, 1947:

The privilege you have accorded me of reading these chapters in manuscript, I appreciate very much. Quite apart from quotations from my own writings, I assure you my enjoyment in reading what you have to say in each chapter. I appreciate your candor and earnestness as manifested in your discussion much of which is unquestionably colored by experiences you have had through coming in contact with brethren and perhaps some others who voice opinions which are at variance with either or both the letter and the spirit of the teachings of the Scriptures upon the subject of the eldership, with particular reference to the manner in which they are placed in the position of authority in the congregation.

From my point of view there is little, if any, difference in our thinking concerning the terms *ordain* and *appoint*. Our greatest difficulty appears to rest in our misunderstanding each other. Certainly, no such thought ever entered my mind as that God almighty would or could ordain or appoint any one or more men in an eldership independently of the initiation of the move by the congregation. Such thought upon the part of anyone is positively inane. I agree with you that there are no doubt many men in the church who possess amply the qualifications prerequisite to service in the eldership who are, nevertheless, not elders because the congregation has not designated them for such service.

When I received that letter from Brother Deveny, I was encouraged to think that the breach in our understanding of the words "ordain" and "appoint" had narrowed. But from his letters to me, herein contained, and other communications of more

recent date I am forced to conclude that we are farther apart in our conception of the meaning and proper use of the two terms than I had suspected.

Many thousands of words have been added to this book in an effort to reach a mutual understanding and agreement on this issue and much time has been consumed trying to affect such. From study, I am as confident that Brother Deveny is in error as he seems to regard me. If he and I were agreed on this point and also on "the husband of one wife," having children that believe," and "novice," I feel that we could join our efforts and almost affect a revolution in the thinking and practice of the churches of Christ everywhere.

May the Lord bless us in coming closer and closer together, in our understanding of this issue, and yet closer to the Lord and to His Truth.

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#### DOES GOD HEAR PRAYER

*If radio's slim fingers  
Can pluck a melody  
From night and toss it o'er  
A continent or sea  
If the petaled white notes  
Of a violin  
Are flown across a mountain  
Or a city's din  
If songs like crimson roses  
Are culled from thin, blue air,  
Why should mortals wonder  
If God hears prayer?*

—Ethel Roming Fuller

## J. W. McGARVEY'S BOOK

THE TYPE had been set and the galley sheets, the page proofs and the final makeup of the pages with the running heads and page numbers had all been completed and successively proof-read and corrected and ready for the final operation in book manufacture when I heard that a reprint of Brother J. W. McGarvey's 1870 edition of *A Treatise on the Eldership* had just appeared on the book-sellers' shelves. I purchased a copy immediately and discovered a "gold mine" of reasoning on the subject.

This reprint is a book of 79 pages of good legible reading and sells for about \$1.25.

An old copy of this eighty-year-old book was found by Brother Joseph Cox of Louisville, Kentucky, and sent to Brother George W. DeHoff, at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, who took upon himself the task of its resurrection.

After having written and gathered data so extensively for my book I was loath to say finis without tapping such a source of information and letting some wisdom, from the almost unerring pen of that veteran of Bible knowledge of whom the *London Times* once wrote: "In all probability John W. McGarvey is the ripest Bible scholar on earth," flow over the pages of my efforts lending its seasoning influence to that of quotations I had already made from others who have stacked their arms of warfare and hung their swords of battle on the jasper walls of the kingdom they loved and have gone over the river to their reward.

If someone retorts that McGarvey worked with the Missionary Society and cannot be depended upon, it may be of interest to note that while he worked with the societies he made no effort to

defend them as Scriptural aids or adjuncts in disseminating Bible knowledge. That although, working through the missionary society when called upon to give an example of churches thus cooperating in the preaching of the gospel he replied: "I do not find in the New Testament a single example of two or more churches that cooperated in mission work."

When he spoke or wrote as a Bible scholar it is almost universally conceded that what he said could be accepted at full face value.

Brother DeHoff has very graciously given me leave to quote, without restriction, from his reprint of Brother McGarvey's book on *The Eldership*.

I would advise that you get a copy and read it.

## THE ELDERSHIP

BY J. W. McGARVEY

### INTRODUCTION

Does the New Testament prescribe a form of church government? Protestants have commonly answered this question in the negative; and having thus answered, they have proceeded to adopt such forms of government as best suited the tastes and judgement of the various parties into which they are divided. We think that before proceeding thus far, they should have considered the more fundamental question, Does the New Testament authorize any government at all in the Church? If it does not, then every form of church government is a usurpation. It is altogether certain that without divine authority no human being has a right to control the religious conduct of his neighbor, especially to cut off his neighbor from church membership or the privileges pertaining thereto.

But it is not denied that the New Testament authorizes the exercise of government in the church; it is only denied that the *form* of government is prescribed. It is even admitted by many

that a certain *form* of government existed in the apostolic age; yet denied that this form was intended to be perpetual.

It is not the purpose of this treatise to fully discuss this question, or to exhibit in detail the New Testament form of church government; but the theme which we have chosen assumes the existence of an eldership in the church, and the development of it will necessarily involve the settlement of the more fundamental question above stated. If it be ascertained that any church government at all is divinely authorized, it must appear as a very singular circumstance if the form of that government is not indicated. Moreover, if we find a form of government in existence in the apostolic churches, we shall demand something above mere human judgment or experience to justify an abandonment of it, or even a modification of it. No less than the same authority which institutes can abolish. What God had instituted he alone may abolish. He may abolish by his word, or he may abolish providentially by finally rendering impossible what had once been instituted but unless it is abolished every divine appointment must stand forever.

J. W. McGARVEY

#### THERE IS SUCH AN OFFICE

After the above preliminary statements, we proceed to inquire, Is there an office in the church called the Eldership?

The common English version of the New Testament does not contain the term *eldership*, but the term *presbutterion* in the original should be so translated. This uniformity requires; for the adjective *presbiteros* is uniformly translated *elder*, and the only rendering of *presbutterion* which harmonizes with this is *eldership*. This term should occur three times in the English Testament, twice having reference to the Jewish Sanhedrim, and once to the eldership in the church. Lu. 22:66; Acts 22:5; 1 Tim. 4:14. In this last passage our English version has *presbytery*, which is the Greek word anglicised, and is the exact equivalent of *eldership*. The body so styled, as the term itself indicates, was composed of the individual elders of the church referred to.

But why should we argue a proposition which is not denied? It is indisputable that there was a body of men in the primitive churches called *elders*, and that so many of these as were found in one congregation constituted the *eldership* of that congregation.

Individuals have been found who admit all this, and admit that there should be an eldership in the churches of all ages; who also ascribe to the eldership of modern churches the functions which belonged to those in the primitive age; but who deny that the term eldership designates an *office*, or that elders are properly styled *officers*. They deny, indeed, the existence of office in the church, and would use the term *work* where the term *office* is commonly employed. We regard the distinction as one between words rather than ideas; for one of a body of men, who has any *work* specially assigned to him by the body, is an officer of that body, in the full import of the term. If, then, we shall, in the course of our investigation, ascertain that the elders of the church are charged with the performance of public duties assigned to them by their brethren, we shall thereby know that they are entitled to the name of officers. If, after this, any shall still prefer not to *call* them officers, while recognizing all the functions with which they are charged, we care not to have a war about words with such persons.

#### TITLES OF THE OFFICE

The term eldership means *the office of an elder*. This assertion will be proved in proving that an elder is an officer. The termination *ship* appended to the title of an officer, as *secretaryship*, *auditorship*, *governorship*, is indicative of office.

It is well known that the term elder is an adjective in the comparative degree, and that its primary meaning is *older*. When used as a substantive, it means an *older person*. The same is true of its Greek representative, *presbuteros*. It is also well known that many words have, in addition to their primary meaning, a technical or official signification. For example, the familiar adjective *general* is sometimes used as the title of a military officer.

Major, greater, is the title of another; and *corporal* which means pertaining to the body is the title of still another. So the terms secretary, auditor, judge, mate, professor, and many others, have each an official as well as a primary signification. So it may be with the term elder. Whether it is so or not is to be determined, as the same question is determined in reference to these other words, by usage. We will now examine its New Testament usage sufficiently to settle this question.

The following statement is made concerning Paul and Barnabas while engaged in their first missionary tour: "When they had *ordained them elders* in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." Acts xiv: 23. The term here rendered *ordained* is *cheirotoneo*. It is compounded of *Cheir*, the *hand*, and *teino*, to *stretch forth*, and its primary meaning is *to stretch forth the hand*. But from the fact that bodies of men frequently expressed a choice by an elevation of the hand, it acquired the meaning of *to choose* or *to appoint* by an extension of the hand; and finally it came to mean to appoint without reference to the method of appointing. Such is the testimony of scholars, and it is confirmed by the usage of the term. It occurs in only one other place in the New Testament, where it is said of an unnamed brother whom Paul sent to Corinth with Titus, that he "*was chosen* by the churches." 2 Cor. vii: 19. How the churches chose him, whether by a show of hands or in some other way, is not determined by this term, nor by the context. Another instance of its use is found in Josephus. He represents Alexander Bala, the Syrian King who claimed jurisdiction over Judea, as writing to Jonathan, the brother of Judas Maccabaeus, these words: "We therefore *do ordain* thee this day high priest of the Jews." Here there was no stretching out the hand, but an appointment to office by a single individual, and through the instrumentality of a letter. Clearer proof of the definition we have given could not be demanded.

Substituting this definition for the term *ordained* in the passage we are considering, we read that Paul and Barnabas "*ap-*

*pointed*" for them elders in every church. These elders, then, were made such by appointment; but Paul and Barnabas certainly did not make *older men* *by* appointment; neither would the passage make complete sense if it read, "They appointed for them older men in every church." To complete the sense, it would be necessary to add the office or position to which the older men were appointed. The considerations show that the term is here used not in its primary sense, but in a sense which designates position obtained by appointment. But an appointment puts men into office, and *elder* is therefore the official title conferred by this appointment. The process of appointment will be considered in another part of this treatise.

The same conclusion follows from Paul's statement to Titus: "I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting and *ordain elders* in every city." Ti. 1:5. The term here rendered *ordain* is *kathisteeemi*, the Greek word most commonly used in both the New Testament and the Greek version of the Old Testament, for appointing to office. It is used to express the appointment of Joseph as governor over Egypt, and of the other officers under him, Gen. xii: 33-34; Acts vii: 10; for the appointment of David as ruler over Israel, 2nd Sam. vi: 21; for the appointment of rulers over household servants, Matt. xxiv: 45; of a judge in civil jurisprudence, Lev. xii: 14; Acts vii: 27; and of Jewish high priests, Heb. v: 1; viii: 3.

Now, the fact that this term so frequently expressed the idea of appointment to office does not necessarily prove that it has this meaning in any given passage. Whether it does or not, is to be determined by the context, and we should always try its primary meaning first. Its primary meaning is *to set* or *place* locally. It is so used twice in the New Testament, Acts xvii: 15; Jas. iii: 6. But Paul could not mean that Titus was to set elders or place elders in every church. There would be no good sense in such a rendering, and therefore, the secondary sense of the term must be adopted. With the universal consent of scholars and critics, we render it *appoint*. Titus, then was to *appoint* elders

in every city, and the term elders designates the office to which they were appointed.

In this fact we find further proof of our first proposition, that there is such an office in the church as the eldership. We shall find, as we proceed, still further confirmation of both these conclusions. In the meantime, we must prescribe a rule by which to distinguish between those instances in which the term elder is used in its primary sense and those in which it has its official sense. The law of the context, the first great law for ascertaining the meaning of ambiguous terms, must be our guide. When the context indicates that a comparison as to age is intended by the writer, we must give the term its primary sense of *elder*; but when the context shows that the persons spoken of sustain an official relation to the church, it must be understood in its official sense. In nearly all instances the distinction is drawn; in a few, the meaning is somewhat uncertain. We shall see and know more of these instances as we proceed further with the discussion.

The second title of this office which we shall consider is expressed by the Greek word *episcopē*, rendered in the English version once *bishoprick* and once *office of a bishop*. It is derived from the verb *episcopēo*, whose primary meaning is *to look upon*; but in usage it conveys the idea of looking upon with a view to inspection or control. The noun *episcopē*, therefore, means *inspection* or *oversight*; and from the fact that visiting is often done for the purpose of inspection, it is sometimes rendered *visitation*. The *visitations* of God were sometimes for good and sometimes for evil to the party visited, and this term is used in both cases. See Lu. xix: 44; Is. x: 3, *Septuagint*.

We have also, from the same root, the masculine noun *episcopos*, which means the man who performs the act designated by *episcopēo*, and is best represented in English by *overseer*. The term *bishop*, by which it is most usually rendered in the common version, is objectionable on two accounts: *first*, it does not correspond in meaning to the original; *second*, it conveys a meaning to the mass of readers not attached to the original word.

*Overseer* corresponds to the original, in etymology, and also in current meaning, and it is the only English word which does so. It should, therefore, be adopted into the English version, and into the speech of those who would call bible things by bible names.

Now, it is not claimed for either of these substantives that in its primary sense it refers to an office in the church; for primarily, neither has any allusion to the church. But it is claimed that like the term elder, they acquired an appropriated sense, one of them becoming the title of a church officer, and the other the name of his office. The proof of this we will now present; and we beg the reader to remember, lest he grow weary of these apparently useless inquiries, that we are now discoursing upon this subject as though nothing were known of it, and we must therefore take nothing as granted. We happen also to know that there is practical need for this part of our inquiry.

#### THE TITLES EXPLAINED

1. The term *episcopos*, *overseer*, is used as the equivalent of *elder* in its official sense. This is clear from the use of the two terms in the 20th chapter of Acts. Luke says, that from Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus and called the *elders* of the church. Here, according to a rule already established, *the elders* of the church must mean not the older men, but those called elders, officially. But Paul says to these elders, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you *overseers*." The elders, then, and the *overseers* in the church at Ephesus were the same persons, and *overseers* is but another title by which they were known. Moreover, they had been made overseers by the Holy Spirit, which implies that by some process dictated by the Holy Spirit, they had been formally placed in that position. This corresponds to the appointment by which we have seen that persons entered the eldership, and is sufficient to establish the presumption that they were made overseers by the same appointment which made them elders. We have further proof of this use of the term in the epistle to Titus. Paul says, "I left thee in Crete that

thou shouldest ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee; if any be blameless," &c.; and then adds, "For an overseer must be blameless." Now, the fact that an overseer should be blameless, could be no reason why a blameless person must be ordained elder, unless an elder is the same as an overseer. It is the same as if I should say to a literary society of students, Appoint a President of your society, if any be found acquainted with parliamentary rules; for the chairman of such a society should be acquainted with these rules. Now, in this example, if a person knew nothing more of the word chairman than its etymology would indicate, *the man of the chair*, he could not fail to see that I used the term as another title for the President of the society. It is equally clear in the case before us, that Paul uses the term overseer as another title for him who is called elder.

2. The term *episcopée* is used to designate the position occupied by the *episcopos*, or overseers. This is seen in 1 Ti. iii: 1-2. Paul says, "If a man desires *episcopée* he desires a good work. An *episcopos*, then, must be blameless," &c. Here it is clear that he who desires *episcopée*, desires to be *episcopos*. If *episcopos* is overseer, then *episcopée* must be the position of an overseer; and what shall we call this position in English? Mr. Green translates it "*a post of oversight*," not a bad expression of the meaning. He renders it in the same way in Acts 1: 20. "*His post of oversight* let another take." I prefer the single word *overseership*, because it is shorter, and corresponds more closely to the correlative term *overseer*. Whatever be the expression, however, the idea remains the same, and the term designates the office held by an overseer.

It is here objected by some, that we should not call the overseership an *office*, because Paul in this passage expressly calls it a *work*: "If any man desire the overseership, he desires a good work." Undoubtedly, it is a work; and so is every office in either church or State, unless it be a mere sinecure. The fact that it is a work makes it none the less an office. If the President of the United States were to say, "He who desires a foreign mission

desires a heavy work," it would not be inferred from the term work that a foreign mission is not an office.

The conclusion thus naturally and necessarily springing from these passages of Scripture will be confirmed as we proceed to develop the functions of the office. We will find that the elders or overseers of the church are charged with such duties, and entrusted with such authority as makes them officers of the church in the fullest sense of the term.

Before leaving this branch of the subject, we must notice another question which has caused confusion in some minds. It has been assumed that the elders constitute a class out of which the overseers are chosen; the elders being the older men of the church, and the overseers the officers. We have already answered this question by showing that the term *elders* is used in an official sense to designate the same persons as the overseers. The elders of the church at Ephesus were all embraced in the term overseers; for, as we have seen, *the elders*, not merely a part of them, had been made overseers.

The third and last official title which we shall notice is *pastor* or *shepherd*. This term, in the substantive form, is used but once in the New Testament with reference to church officials. It is in the well known passage, Eph. iv: 11, where *pastors* are enumerated among the gifts bestowed upon the Church by Christ. The evidence that this term designates the *overseers* or *elders*, is conclusive, and may be briefly stated. The Greek term for shepherd is *poimeen*, and the verb *poimaino* means *to do the work of a shepherd*. Now, he to whom this verb applies is a shepherd, just as he who sows is a sower, he who reaps is a reaper, he who speaks is a speaker, he who sings is a singer, &c., &c. But Paul exhorts the overseers in Ephesus "*to be shepherds to the church.*" Acts xx: 28; and Peter exhorts the elders of the churches to which he writes, "*Be shepherds to the flock of God which is among you,*" and promise that when the "*chief shepherd*" shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory. They then, were shepherds and Christ, the chief shepherd.

The term *pastor*, the Latin for shepherd, has come into common use from the influence of the Latin version of the Scriptures. There is one all-sufficient reason for preferring our own Anglo-Saxon term *shepherd*. It is found in the fact that *pastor* has become perverted by sectarian usage, and designates in popular phraseology, an entirely different office from the one to whom it is applied in the Scriptures. It has become a synonym for a settled preacher, and is often used for the purpose of distinguishing the preacher from those who are Scripturally called the *pastors* of the church. It will perhaps be impossible to recover the term from this abuse, and therefore, it is better to throw it away.

Another good reason for preferring *shepherd* is, that its primary meaning is familiar to the most illiterate reader, and the metaphor by which the overseer is thus styled is perfectly intelligible to every one; whereas, the term *pastor* is known to the masses only in its appropriated sense.

#### DUTIES OF THE OFFICE

The title of an office is often taken from some characteristic duty belonging to it. Thus the title President is taken from the act of presiding; Secretary from the act of writing; Auditor (*hearer*) from the act of hearing financial reports. In such cases, the information derived from the title is generally meagre. In some instances, however, offices newly created adopt the titles of previously existing offices which are similar to them; and in such instances the titles carry with them all of their previous significance, except so far as this is modified by the nature of the new office. Thus the term President, which first meant one who presides over an assembly and enforces order in its proceedings, when transferred to the chief officer of a college, and to the chief magistrate of the United States, carried with it the chief part of its previously acquired meaning. Now, it so happens that all the titles by which the Elder of a church is known were adopted from previously existing offices, and brought with them into their new application much of their former significance. That significance will enable us, therefore, to obtain a general idea of the

duties of the office, and to better appreciate the more specific statements of the Apostles which will afterwards be considered.

The title *Elder*, which is most frequently used by the Apostles, and which is still the most popular of these titles, obtained an official signification among the Jews long before its adoption into the Christian Church. Originally it designated the older men, or heads of families in Israel, who exercised a patriarchal government over their posterity: See Ex. iv: 29; xix: 7. In the days of Christ it had become the title of the rulers of the Jewish synagogues, and of one of the classes composing the Sanhedrim. Reliable information in reference to the functions of the office among the Jews is quite meagre; but it is sufficient to justify the assertion that those who enjoyed the title exercised authority in some capacity. When it was adopted, therefore, into the Christian Church, it brought with it at least this general idea, that those to whom it was applied were rulers in the church. The exact nature and limits of their authority it could not of course designate.

The term *episcopos* brought with it a more clearly defined significance, and furnishes more definite information in reference to the duties of the office. Among the Athenians it was the title of "magistrates sent out to tributary cities, to organize and govern them." (See Robinson's N. T. Lexicon, and references there given.) Among the Jews it had very much that variety of application which the term overseer now has in English. It is used in the Septuagint for the officers appointed by Josiah to oversee the workmen engaged in repairing the temple, 2 Ch. xxxiv: 12, 17; for the overseers of workmen employed in rebuilding Jerusalem after the captivity; Ne. xi: 5, 14; for the overseers of the Levites on duty in Jerusalem; Ne. xi: 22; for the overseers of the singers in the temple worship; Ne. xii: 42; and for subordinate civil rulers; Jos. Ant. 10. 4. 2. In all these instances it designates persons who have oversight of the persons for the purpose of directing their labors and securing a faithful performance of the tasks assigned them.

Such a word when applied to a class of officers in the Christian

Church, necessarily carried with it the significance already attached to it. It indicated, both to Jew and Greek, that the persons so styled were appointed to superintend the affairs of the church, to direct the activities of the members, to see that everything was done that should be done, and that it was done by the right person, at the right time, and in the right way. Anything less than this would be insufficient to justify the title *overseer* as it was currently employed in that age.

#### HOW TO BE SHEPHERDS

The titles applied to the Eldership are well chosen, and constitute an exhaustive classification of its duties. When the Elders learn how to be shepherds, how to be overseers, and how to be teachers, they have learned how to discharge all the functions of their office. We propose now to inquire how they may perform those duties which belong to them as shepherds.

All the duties of a literal shepherd, as understood by the people who gave the word its religious significance, are embraced in these three: 1. To keep the sheep from straying. 2. To lead them to water and pasturage by day, and back to the fold, when need be, at night. 3. To protect them against all danger by night and by day. The pastoral, or shepherd duties of the Eldership, as the nature of the title shepherd and the apostolic precepts both require, correspond strictly to these three.

First then, in order to be a good shepherd, the Elder must exercise the utmost care to prevent individual sheep from straying away from the flock; and when one, as it sometimes will, eludes all vigilance and strays away, he is to be prompt and energetic in going out to search for it and bring it back. Jesus, with special reference to his own work in hunting up the lost sheep of the house of Israel, beautifully illustrates this duty by a parable. He says to those who condemned him for receiving sinners, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep. If he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine, and go after that which is lost till he find it? And when he hath found it he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing; and when he cometh home he calleth to-

gether his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance." What can be the meaning of this parable, unless it be that when a disciple strays away from the path of duty, the very first obligation of the shepherd, rising above all the obligations at that moment due to the faithful brethren is to go and hunt up, and try to win back, the wanderer? He is to leave the ninety and nine, even in the wilderness, and go. If a congregation were assembled on the Lord's day for worship, and the Elders, upon looking over their faces, were to miss one, and ascertain that he was absent in some gay company, or at home in an ill humor, or about to start out for the day on a pleasure excursion, would they be pressing the teaching of this parable too far, should one of them immediately leave the house of God, and go to bring in that person? How much joy it would create among the saints on earth, and among the angels in heaven, if such a thing were done successfully and often! Should any one, however, be unwilling to press the analogy to this extent, he must still admit that the nearest possible approach to this degree of vigilance can alone meet fully the demands of the shepherd's duty.

Such reflections make it very painful to look abroad at the well known condition of many congregations—the sheep scattered far and wide through the wilderness, and the shepherds eating and drinking, or asleep on the ground. Oh, that we had some Jeremiah to lift up his voice against the unfaithful shepherds of the flock of God!

If such vigilance as we have named is needed in hunting up those who wander away, how much more is needed to *prevent* such wandering? The good Shepherd will endeavor to have as little of the former work to do as possible, by doing more of the latter. When the disposition of wanderer is discovered, he will be prompt to counteract it. All this requires constant watchfulness and inquiry on the part of each Elder, and very frequent

consultations of the board of Elders. We will speak of the latter more fully at another time.

*Secondly.* We have already spoken sufficiently for the purposes of this treatise, on the second class of the shepherd's duties. To lead the flock whither they should go, by going before, and calling them to follow, is simply to be an example to the flock, as we have stated and endeavored to enforce in a former section.

*Thirdly.* The duty of protecting the church against foes both from within and from without, is not only implied in the title of shepherd, but specifically enjoined by Paul in a passage already cited more than once. He warns the Ephesian Elders that ravenous wolves would come in among them, not sparing the flock; and that schismatics would spring up within, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them; and says to them, "Therefore watch." They must watch, then, against these two dangers, and this makes the Elders the proper guardians of the church against false teachers and schismatics.

#### HOW TO WITHDRAW THE DISORDERLY

. . . . While it is the duty of the elders in their capacity as shepherds, to seek the straying members, and to bring them back, if possible, to their duty, they must necessarily sometimes fail in this effort, and then begins their work as overseers. The wanderer is found incorrigible, and is walking disorderly, notwithstanding all proper efforts to bring him to repentance. The church must now withdraw from him as from those who will not hear the church; and upon the overseers devolves the duty of seeing that this withdrawal takes place.

We have reached the conclusion, that in the act of withdrawing from a disorderly member, both the Eldership and the congregation as a body should take part. We now inquire what particular part each should take. We here raise three questions which cover the whole ground of inquiry: 1. Who is to judge of the facts? 2. Who is to judge of the law in the case? 3. Who is to execute the sentence of the law?

Neither of these questions is formally raised by any New Testament writer, but enough is left on record, we think, to determine what was the practice of the primitive churches, and the will of the inspired apostles. The elders are styled the shepherds, the overseers, and the rulers of the church, and these titles necessarily imply that they are the constituted judges of the conduct of members. The shepherd must of necessity take knowledge of the conduct of his flock, and be better qualified to judge of it, if fit to be a shepherd, than any or all of the flock. The overseer, by the very nature of his office and work, is a judge of the facts in the conduct of those under his oversight. And the ruler, who, as in this case, has no legislative authority, and only a concurrent executive authority, must be a ruler chiefly in the judicial sense of the term. Add to these considerations of the fact of the utter incapacity of a mixed assembly of men, women and children, to decide upon facts in many cases of church discipline, and we are forced to the conclusion that the Elders are the judges of the facts in every case.

Now, the end to be attained, in the case under consideration, is the united action of the elders and the disciples in withdrawing from one who has been found worthy of exclusion from the church. Any method of procedure which secures harmony and concert of action in the case must be pronounced good. The method which has been adopted in many well regulated churches, and which I regard as the best, is the following:

The facts of the case, and the evidence upon which they have been ascertained, are reported by one of the elders in the name of all. The law of Christ which is violated is pointed out, and the duty of withdrawing from persons who persistently violate this law, is made plain. It is then asked, if there is any reason known to any person why the church should not immediately withdraw from the offender. A pause is made to allow any one to speak who knows or thinks he knows such reason. If any one claims to have such reason, the case is immediately postponed until the reason can be heard and duly considered, by the Elder-

ship, they being the judges of its relevancy and sufficiency. If no such reason is offered, or if, having been offered and duly considered, it is insufficient, the whole congregation are called upon to arise to their feet and unite in the act of withdrawal. If a majority of them do so, the officiating Elders pronounces some such words as the following:

“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we do now solemnly withdraw the fellowship of this congregation from—, and do humbly beseech Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, to have mercy upon him, that he may be brought to repentance, and that his soul may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Amen.”

(Brother McGarvey was of the same conviction as expressed by Brother E. G. Sewell, that “husband of one wife,” was *mandatory and also restrictive*. I quote him here.—THE AUTHOR.)

*Domestic relations.* To Timothy and Titus both, the apostle prescribes that the overseer shall be the husband of one wife. There has been a vast amount of disputation as to whether this requires him to be a married man. It is alleged, in opposition to this idea, that when churches were planted among a people practicing polygamy, men would frequently be immersed who had a plurality of wives, and that the apostle intends only to prohibit such from being made overseers. *Undoubtedly the use of the numeral one in the text has this force, and it would be unlawful to place a polygamist or bigamist in the office. But while the expression has this force, we think that candor requires the admission that it also has the effect of requiring a man to be a married man.* That he should be the husband of one wife, forbids having less than one as clearly as it forbids having more than one. If it be said that a man owns but one farm, it is just as clearly implied that he owns one as that he owns no more than one. Moreover, the context confirms the conclusion; for the apostle proceeds in both epistles to state how the overseer must govern his household, and especially his children; which statements imply that he is to be a man of family.

It has been urged as an objection to this conclusion, that it would disqualify Paul himself, and Barnabas and Timothy for the office of Elder although they held offices or positions of much greater responsibility. But this objection can have no force, unless it be made to appear that these brethren were qualified for the Elder's office, or that the qualifications of an Apostle or an Evangelist include those of an Elder. Neither of the two, however, can be made to appear, and therefore the objection has no force whatever. Indeed, it seems most fitting that men whose chief work led them from city to city and nation to nation, through all kinds of danger and hardship, should be freed from the care of a family, and equally fitting that the shepherd, whose work was always at home and in the midst of the families of his flock, should be a man of family. A married man certainly possesses advantages for such work that are impossible to an unmarried man, and the experience of the world must confirm the wisdom of the requirement that the overseer shall be the husband of one wife. It may be well to add that one living wife is clearly meant, and that there is no allusion to the number of deceased wives a man may have had. If my wife is dead, I am not now her husband.

It is also required that the candidate for the Eldership shall "rule well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;" or, as it is expressed in Titus, "having faithful children not accused of riot, or unruly." The reason given for this requirement is this: "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" The figure of interrogation is here employed in order to assert, most emphatically, that if a man does not know how to rule his own house, he can not take care of the Church of God—he is incompetent to fill the office of overseer. It is altogether vain for uninspired men to demur against a decision so emphatically rendered by an apostle; we therefore accept it without qualification.

## EXCURSUS

IT WILL be noted that Brother McGarvey says, after admitting that "husband of one wife," is restrictive, limiting the elder to only one wife at a time: "We think that candor requires the admission that it also has the effect of requiring a man to be a married man."

If this is the meaning then the married status *must* be maintained all through one's tenure as an elder in order to the maintenance of blamelessness. And to be consistent the elder whose wife is deceased must marry immediately upon the death of his wife or be deposed from the eldership.

Brother McGarvey also states: "If my wife is dead, I am not now her husband." Therefore, he would not be the "husband of one wife." Now, if he were an elder what should or would he do? This is what I have been told, and to me it seemed upon pretty good authority, that he once stated: 'If I were an elder, and my wife should die, I would resign the next day.' Now, *me thinks* that those who hold him as authority on the positive side of this issue should also be ready to accept his exposition on the death of an elder's wife. That is consistency for you. To the author it is both consistent and manly for one to accept the logical conclusion and consequences of any position he espouses.

To justify their position some may argue that "husband of one wife," for the elder carries the same meaning that "having been the wife of one man," does for the widow in 1 Timothy 5:9. But if it is claimed, and it usually is, that the latter means she must be blameless having had only one husband at a time, then we are forced to conclude that to be the extent of "husband of one wife." Or if you claim the two clauses carry the same meaning and argue that "having been the wife of one man," means having been only once married then you are forced to a third position that "husband of one wife," means that the elder must have been only once married, which would prohibit the second marriage of an elder.

Concerning, "having been the wife of one man," Adam Clarke

says: "Having lived in conjugal fidelity with her husband; or having had but one husband at a time; or, according to others, having never been but once married. But the former is the opinion of some of the most eminent of the Greek fathers, and appears to be that most consistent with the scope of the place, and with truth."

Again, to the author, "having been the wife of one man," and "husband of one wife," mean the same: *having had but one companion at a time and therefore blameless in sex relations*. And if they are synonymous *and you claim that a woman cannot be helped by the church unless she is a widow, then I think to be consistent you should conclude that a man cannot be an elder unless he is a widower*.

Yes, it is hard for the writer to see why the wife's dying would not disqualify one for the eldership if the statement actually requires the existence of a wife to qualify him for the office. I contend that the maintenance of that status, *in any point*, which qualifies for the elderhood is necessary throughout one's tenure as an elder.

It certainly appears to the author that taking "husband of one wife," to mean a positive requirement that the elder be a married man is vulnerable to becoming involved in more absurdities than most any position which may be held.

In arguing *that position* we lose sight of the fact that the design of the apostle, or Spirit, was to establish *blamelessness* and to guard against any form of adulterers being elevated to the presbytery which would, indeed, be hazardous to the cause.

## IMPOSING THE HANDS

**S**HORTLY AFTER the reprint of the McGarvey book started over the counters I also came into possession of a small booklet of fifty some pages entitled *The Constitution of the Church* by M. C. Franklin in which the author majored on the above caption. (Brother Franklin lived at Greenville, Texas and made his journey into eternity early in July 1950.)

He was of the conviction that evangelists, elders and deacons were, in the early days of the church, appointed to their respective offices or work by fasting, prayer and laying on of the hands. And having given the opposite position, in this book, I feel that fairness calls for this position a place also. In all my study and research on the subject, this pamphlet is the only production, coming to my notice, giving a forthright exposition of that conviction.

Brother Franklin set forth the following canon: "*Any precept of the apostles or any precedent of the apostolic church is binding forever upon the church, unless it can be shown that such precept or example was limited, as to its application, to a particular time, or people, or country, or circumstances.*" Then he states that he proposes to examine every relevant Scripture and to interpret them according to this canon. That is not half bad.

On page eight he assails the position of "no officers in the church." He concedes the point argued by many that there is no separate Greek word used for office in 1 Timothy 3:1, but brings up the Greek *episkope* which is construed by Greek scholars, "office of a bishop." And *bishop* which has a companion word *overseer* carrying with it the idea of responsibility and authority.

Then he adds: "The dictionary defines 'office' as 'a person

appointed or elected to some position of responsibility and authority in the public service, or in some corporation, society, or the like.' Now, since evangelists, bishops, and deacons are appointed or elected to positions of responsibility in a society (the church), it follows that they are officers in the ordinary usage of that term; any who raise the objection that they are not are simply striving 'about words, to no profit, to the subverting of them that hear' " (2 Timothy 2:14). p. 9.

#### FIVE OFFICES IN THE CHURCH

"We have named, in the New Testament, five classes of officers in the primitive church: apostles, prophets, evangelists, bishops, and deacons. It will be observed that I have used the words 'pastor' and 'bishop' synonymously, and some may question the propriety of so doing. It will suffice to say here that the words *pastor*, *shepherd*, *elder*, *presbyter*, *overseer* and *bishop* all refer to the same office. Fuller consideration will be given to that question in the next chapter, and will be accompanied with proof that they do refer to the same office." His booklet, pp. 9, 10.

#### TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT OFFICES

Brother Franklin continues his discussion by stating that two of the five offices in the early church, the *apostolic* and the *prophetic*, were temporary and passed with the completion or end of those things which were "in part," so far as a personal representative was concerned.

But he holds, as do some others I have quoted under Ephesians 4:11, that the office of the evangelist is permanent and is to continue simultaneously with those of the elder and deacon.

#### THE EVANGELIST

"That Timothy was an evangelist is indisputable. 2 Tim. 4:5. But Paul instructed Timothy on this wise: 'And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' 2 Tim. 2:2. This teaches, if it teaches anything, that Tim-

othy was to arrange to perpetuate the office he occupied; and that not by a single man but by 'men.' " p. 12

"The word evangelist is the English equivalent of the Greek *euaggelistes*. This is really a compound word, the first syllable, *eu*, meaning 'good, well.' The rest of the word comes from *aggelos* meaning 'a messenger, envoy.' The word *aggelos* is used in different senses in the New Testament. When it is used to designate a mere messenger as from one man to another it is translated 'messenger,' or some synonym. But when it is used to indicate a supernatural being who carries God's messages it is translated by 'angel.' But in any case it means 'messenger.'

The messenger (*aggelos*) must, of course, announce his message; that action is expressed by the verb *aggello*. And the thing that he announces, the message, is called *aggelia*. Thus we have the messenger, the message, and the act of announcing the message expressed by three very similar words derived from the same source. It will be noticed that these words carry no notion of whether the message is good or bad; of whether the messenger is one of bad news or of good news. Consequently the New Testament writers prefixed the word *eu* (good) to each of the three forms and slightly changed the spelling of the latter. Thus we have *euaggelistes*, 'a bringer of good tidings, an evangelist'; *euaggelizo*, 'to bring good news, to announce glad tidings'; *euaggelion*, 'good tidings.' From this we see that an evangelist is primarily a messenger with good news, and the good news that he announces is the gospel. Indeed, *euaggelion* is frequently translated by the word 'gospel.' " pp. 14, 15.

"Observe (3) that the chief duty of an evangelist is in the field of doctrine. He is to preach, exhort, rebuke, reprove, charge, teach, warn. Some of these duties are also committed to the bishops, as we shall see later. We are not to suppose a conflict here; indeed, there will be no conflict if both evangelists and bishops are serving in the spirit of the Lord. They are not looking for honors; they are trying to save souls. But they can and must act as checks on each other in view of the fact that sometimes wolves enter in sheep's clothing. The evangelist is to protect

the church from ungodly bishops, and rebuke them publicly for their sins; and the bishops are to protect the church from false teaching that may come in the mouths of heretical and ungodly evangelists.

“Observe, finally, (4) the evangelist must be an industrious man. He is to give himself to reading (study), to exhortation, to teaching. When the duties of teaching (publicly or privately) are not being discharged, or some other evangelistic duty pressing, he should be in his study, reading, meditating, planning. The church does not need, for its preacher, an expert fisherman or hunter, a golf pro, nor a civic club orator. I am not saying that a preacher should have no recreation: I am saying that he should be *extremely* moderate.

A preacher’s study is his stronghold and the pulpit his throne. If he does his duty in his study he will never need to make apology in the pulpit. Rather his mind will always be fresh and his sermons edifying. If I were a bishop I would never consent to the hiring of an evangelist until I had examined his library. I would want to know not only what books he had, but I would want to see thumb prints on the pages. I would hate to get a preacher that would ‘run down’ in about a year and have to move on. The church can’t prosper under such conditions.”

pp. 16, 17.

## THE CHOOSING OF OFFICERS

### DEACONS

Brother Franklin takes a rather broadside slap at the loose and careless way of choosing elders and deacons and proceeds to the conclusion that there is a Scriptural precedent established by which the choosing is to be done. He refers to the New Testament as containing “both *general* and *specific* commands. . . . . but we are not warranted in calling any command *general* until we have thoroughly examined every relevant passage of Scripture to see if we can find how it is to be done.” p. 23.

His conclusion is that the seven men chosen in Acts 6 were deacons and that they were chosen by the membership of the

church. Hear him: "As soon as the apostles were appraised of conditions they 'called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said . . . . Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business . . . . And they chose Stephen,' etc.

"I want us to examine these items closely. The use of the definite article before 'multitude' and 'disciples' indicates conclusively that the whole church was called together, and to the whole church were issued the instructions about looking out the seven men. That was not a task for any part or class, but for the whole church. Some expositors have sought to limit the instructions to the men of the church because the apostles addressed them as 'brethren.' But I call attention to the fact that the word 'brethren' is used in the New Testament to indicate women and children as well as men. Thus in the Epistles the writers constantly addressed their readers as 'brethren,' by which we are to understand all the members of the church; otherwise their instructions about Christian living apply only to men—an impossible supposition.

"But this multitude of disciples (the whole church) was to look out seven *men*; by which we are to understand that only males could occupy the office of deacon. This change of words is significant. Women were called brethren, when they were addressed in a mixed group, but they were never called men.

"Note, too, that the apostles, though inspired men, did not presume to select that group of deacons; all they did was to stipulate the qualifications. That they were qualified to make a wise choice cannot be doubted; but evidently the Lord intended that in future ages the whole church should select its officers, in view of which a selection by the apostles would have been a bad precedent.

"The disciples were told to 'look out' in verse 3, and we are told that they 'chose' in verse 5. What is the significance of these words? The 'looking out' is preliminary to the 'choosing.' Each disciple knew what he was looking for—seven men pos-

sessing certain definite qualifications. If his 'looking out' resulted in the finding of only seven qualified men (a very improbable supposition), his task was simple; he simply expressed a choice of these men on the ground that all others, in his judgment, did not qualify. But if his 'looking out' resulted in the finding of a larger number of qualified men, his task became complicated; he had to choose among them by expressing a preference for those who, in his judgment, possessed the qualifications in the greatest measure.

"We are not to suppose that there was a 'lookout committee' to do the looking out, nor a 'nominating committee' to present its recommendations to the church. The apostles issued their instructions to 'the multitude of the disciples' and there is no hint of any intermediate group. By some means not recorded each disciple expressed his choice of men for deacons; and after each disciple had expressed his choice it was found to be the will of the church that the seven men should be deacons whose names are recorded in Acts 6:5.

"The thing that I have been trying to emphasize is that these deacons were selected by the whole church, and that the disciples made choice among men in selecting. I am aware that in some places the opposition to 'voting' almost amounts to hysteria. But I submit that choice cannot be made without voting. The franchise, or right to choose, may be restricted to but one man; but when he selects one and rejects another, he is voting. This selection of the sixth chapter of Acts is the only scripture that throws any light on the choosing of deacons. Unless it can be shown that its application is restricted to the Jerusalem church it stands as a precedent for all churches." pp. 24-26.

#### BISHOPS

"As early as Acts 11:30 we find that there were bishops (elders) in the Jerusalem church, but we are given no hint as to how they became such. Indeed, there is only one verse in the New Testament that gives any indication as to how bishops

were chosen. That verse is Acts 14:23. Before examining that verse I should like to dispose of some objections that may be raised to the foregoing statement. Some have pointed to Titus 1:5 and insisted that the choosing of bishops rests with evangelists. May I say just here that the word used there does not carry the idea of 'choosing' at all. . . . . Also some have pointed to Acts 20:28 as indicating that bishops in the primitive church were chosen by direct command of the Holy Spirit. Just what bearing that would have on the choosing of bishops in the modern church is not clear. . . . .

"Now let us examine particularly the verse in question. 'And when they had appointed for them elders,' etc. The pronoun 'they' refers back to Paul and Barnabas. As the English text stands it appears the Paul and Barnabas selected, or chose, certain men to occupy the office of bishop. But if they did, this is the only instance in the New Testament in which officers or other representatives of the church were chosen for it by other officers. See Acts 6:3, 5; 16:1, 2; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:19. It would be strange if all other precepts and precedents of the apostles were set aside and this lone exception made.

"Such unusual procedure demands that we look into the original text for some clew that will explain the matter. The English student knows that 'appoint' has a wide variety of meanings; and the Greek student knows that no less than six different Greek words are used to represent this variety, and are translated by 'appoint' in the Authorized Version. Thus *anadeiknumi* (Luke 10:1) means 'to show, point out.' But in Acts 14:23 the same writer uses the word *cheirotoneo*, which means 'to vote by stretching out the hand; to create or appoint by vote; to elect, appoint, create,' (Thayer). Luke is telling us then that the elders (bishops) in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch were 'elected by a vote.' If the choosing were done by Paul and Barnabas alone the use of such language would be inappropriate. Had they alone done the choosing Luke would undoubtedly have used the word *anadeiknumi*, as in Luke 10:1 when the Lord chose the apostles. Indeed, the word 'vote' suggests the idea that a con-

siderable number of folk expressed their desires by raising the hand, standing, or otherwise. What certainly took place on that occasion was this: Paul and Barnabas first of all stated the qualifications that must be possessed by bishops (cf. Acts 6:3). After which they conducted the election with the whole church participating. In other words, the members of the church appointed bishops by electing them; but Paul and Barnabas were the moving spirits in the appointing. This, then, is the way bishops were chosen in the apostolic age. No other scripture indicates the method of choosing. If any reader insists on holding dogmatically to one, and only one, meaning for the word 'appoint' he does not show proper respect for the language used by the writers of the New Testament." pp. 26-28.

### EVANGELISTS

"The word 'evangelist' appears but three times in the New Testament; and only two men are specifically designated as such, namely Philip (Acts 21:8) and Timothy (2 Tim. 4:5). But inasmuch as Paul tells us that the Lord set an order of 'evangelists' in the church (Eph. 4:11) we feel impelled to associate with that order all those preachers of the apostolic era not designated by some other title. Titus, Mark, Barnabas, Silas, Luke, and a host of others were undoubtedly evangelists in the official sense. But how were these men chosen to the evangelistic office? Having before us the example of the Lord choosing the apostles and prophets, and the example of bishops and deacons being chosen by the congregations with which they were associated, the divine constitution would seem incomplete if it did not provide for the choosing of evangelists. The very orderliness of the kingdom of God demands just such a systematic way of choosing evangelists as we have seen in operation in regard to the other officers of the church; and the same orderliness forbids that men shall occupy that office by virtue of self-appointment. It is to our shame that this custom has become all but universal. As in the case of bishops and deacons, there is but one passage of scripture in the New Testament that indicates the method of choosing

evangelists, Acts 16:1-3. 'And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess that believed: but his father was a Greek. The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him.'

"We have noticed that bishops and deacons are chosen by those congregations that they are to shepherd or serve. They have no authority nor official duties outside of those congregations and, consequently, no one outside those congregations has any voice in choosing them. But those things are not true of evangelists. They are to work among the congregations and do not lose their official standing as they go from place to place. Timothy was equally an evangelist in Lystra, Philippi, Corinth, or Ephesus.

"In view of this extensive work of the evangelist he is not chosen, scripturally, by a single congregation. In the case before us we see that two congregations had somewhat to do with Timothy's becoming an evangelist. By the brethren of these congregations Timothy was 'well reported of.' The Greek word used here is *martureo* meaning 'to bear witness, testify.'

"Seemingly Paul had expressed a desire to have such a young man to go with him and be trained in the Lord's work. The brethren therefore recommended Timothy. How they did it we are not told. Somehow they got a consensus of opinion, by vote or otherwise, from the two congregations. Timothy was therefore chosen by the congregations, and the result of their choosing was that he became an evangelist. It is worthy of note that it was not the bishops who chose, or recommended, Timothy. It was 'the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium,' an expression that includes every disciple in those places. Thus we see again that the responsibility for choosing officers falls upon members of the church. Moreover we ought not to overlook the fact that the choosing of an evangelist differs from the choosing of bishops and deacons only as regards the number of congregations of which he represents the choice." pp. 28, 29.

## SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVES

Brother Franklin further reasons that "In the primitive church, as now, there were sometimes occasions for the choosing of men for some particular duty in addition to the duties that devolved upon the regular officers."

He refers to the famine mentioned in Acts 11:27-30, and says: "In consequence of which the disciples of Syria determined to send relief to their brethren in Judaea. Their contributions were sent by the hands of special representatives, Barnabas and Saul. The text teaches us distinctly that the 'disciples' did the sending; by which we are to understand that Barnabas and Saul were not chosen for this mission by evangelists or bishops, but by the 'disciples' themselves."

"Some years later during the reign of Nero there was another such famine. On this occasion Paul traveled among the churches of Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and probably other places, raising contributions for the saints in Judaea. There are two things in connection with this work that we ought to notice.

"First. The churches 'appointed' a well-known man to travel with Paul in making these collections (2 Cor. 8:19). . . . But I wanted to call attention to the word 'appointed.' We find here the same word as in Acts 14:23, *cheirotoneo*. The churches 'elected' this man to travel with Paul as a special representative. Of course he went back to his regular work when the task was done, just as did Barnabas and Saul on the previous occasion, (Acts 12:25). How many congregations participated in choosing this man we do not know; probably as many as were sponsoring the work. (*Sponsoring, here is used illadvisedly for neither of these churches was standing surety for, or, binding itself to answer for default on the part of any of the other churches.* The author).

"Second. As the work neared completion Paul apparently directed the several co-operating churches to send their contributions to Jerusalem by their own chosen representatives. At least those were the instructions he gave to the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 16:3). Notice that the instructions here are given to

‘each one of you,’ and that the ones addressed are to ‘approve’ representatives to do the work. This ‘approving’ demands that a (*dokimazo*, ‘to test, examine, prove, scrutinize’ Theyer) their own choice be made between those who were more or less trustworthy, as shown by their ‘testing.’ Thus we see that again the whole church does the choosing, resulting in the approving or electing of certain ones.” p. 30.

#### CASES OF APPOINTMENT

In coming closer to his conclusion embracing a formal, Scriptural precedent, of appointment to church offices Brother Franklin begins with Acts 6:1-6.

“I wish that the reader would now examine carefully Acts 6:1-6. In verse three the apostles told the multitude of the disciples to ‘Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.’ In verse five we are told that ‘the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen,’ etc. Then in verse six we are told that they set the chosen men ‘before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them.’

“The apostles told the disciples that they (the apostles) would ‘appoint’ the men ‘looked out’ by the disciples. Did the apostles do as they promised? We are told that when the ‘looked out’ (‘chosen’) men were set before them they ‘prayed’ and ‘laid their hands upon them.’ Obviously this ceremony of prayer and imposition of hands constituted the ‘appointment’ promised by the apostles. No other appointment was made as far as the records go. And inasmuch as the chosen men then apparently entered upon their duties without further appointing process, and Luke brings his narrative of the incident to a close, we cannot but conclude that these deacons were appointed by prayer and imposition of hands. . .

“Now let us briefly study the word ‘appoint’ of Acts 6:3. The Greek word used there is *kathistemi*. What is the exact meaning of this word? That can be determined only by its usage. That

it means 'appoint' is certain; but it does not mean 'choose.' The men appointed had previously been chosen by another group. Rather it means to appoint by a ceremonial process, in this case prayer and imposition of hands. This same word is used in Heb. 5:1 and 8:3. Let us look at them. 'For every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed (kathistemi) for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices.' 'For every high priest is appointed (kathistemi) to offer both gifts and sacrifices.' The allusion in both of these passages is to the Aaronic priesthood. It was God who took them from among men, that is, chose them for the priestly office; men had nothing to do with that. But it was men who appointed those whom God had chosen. Of course they appointed them by the ceremonial process that God had dictated. That process is detailed in the twenty-ninth chapter of Exodus. These usages of the word make its meaning clear. Both priests and deacons were appointed (kathistemi) by a ceremonial process, but the details differed in the two cases. We are distinctly told that God stipulated the elements of the process in Exodus 29; and we may rest assured that what the apostles did in Acts 6 they did at God's command. It all boils down to the fact that God decreed different actions to constitute the appointing process (kathistemi) in the two dispensations. Now let us take a look at Titus 1:5: 'For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge.' In this passage Paul uses kathistemi, the same word as is used in Acts 6:3. He says nothing of the choosing of these elders. But how did Titus 'appoint' these men? Since we have the same word here in Acts 6:3, and since the New Testament designates no other way of appointment to church office, we can only conclude that Titus employed the same actions as were used by the apostles in Acts 6:6. That is, he appointed as God had decreed for men to be appointed to holy office in this dispensation.

"In the examples just studied we see that two actions were performed: first, that of choosing or electing and, second, that of

scriptural appointment, commonly called ordination, and designated by the word *kathistemi*.

"There are other examples of scriptural appointment in the New Testament, however, in which the word *kathistemi* is not used, but in which the same actions were performed. To these we shall now direct our attention.

"In Acts 13:1-3 we have the record of the choosing and appointment of the first missionaries. On this occasion the missionaries were chosen by the Holy Spirit but were appointed by the prophets in the church at Antioch with the concurrence, we may presume, of the whole church. These men (Barbanas and Saul) were appointed by fasting, prayer, and the imposition of hands.

"In Acts 14:23 we have the first record of the choosing and appointment of bishops. 'And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.' We noticed in the preceding chapter that the word 'appointed' in this verse is *cheirotoneo* and means 'elected.' After these bishops were thus elected they were appointed to their office by prayer and fasting.

"In 1 Tim. 5:17-22 we have the record of certain instructions Paul gave to Timothy in regard to elders (bishops). Among other things he said, 'Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses. Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear. I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other mens' sins: keep thyself pure.' . . . . that is, to be very careful about whom he ordained to the office of bishop." Paul is saying, by implication, that if the evangelist ordains to holy office a man who is unworthy, he (the evangelist) becomes a partaker of that man's sins. The way to avoid that is to take ample time to investigate and prove the man to see if he is worthy; hence not to ordain him 'hastily.' I have called attention to this passage

as further evidence that in the apostolic church the 'appointment' of officers was done ceremonially. . . . .

"In Acts 16:1-3 we have the record of the choosing of Timothy to the office of evangelist but nothing is said, at that place, of any formal setting apart to the office. That information is supplied to us, however, by Paul in 1 Tim. 4:14. 'Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery,' (eldership). Thus we see that something more was done to Timothy than simply recommending him to the evangelistic office.

"Finally I would cite Heb. 5:11-6:8 as bearing on the question under consideration. In this passage the author is dealing with the general problem of Christian Growth. He severely rebukes those who have been disciples for a long time and still need to be taught 'the rudiments of the first principles.' Then he urges that the doctrine of the 'first principles' be left behind and that the developing Christian press on to perfection. That these things are the first that men must learn and obey is self-evident. Embedded in the very midst of these is the 'laying on of hands.' That also is a first principle. But to what does it have reference? It can not be the laying on of hands for the purpose of healing, nor can it be for the purpose of conveying the gifts of the Spirit, meaning by that the power to work miracles. Both of these things were confined to the apostolic age. (See 1 Cor. 13:8). But the 'laying on of hands' mentioned by the writer of Hebrews is correlated with such things as faith, repentance, and the belief in the resurrection, things that are universal in their application. It can therefore have reference only to the ceremonial appointment of men to church office, as that is the only other thing for which laying on of hands was practiced in the apostolic church.

#### SUMMARY

"We have now seen how officers in the apostolic church were appointed to office after having been chosen, or elected, by the churches. According to the text deacons were appointed by prayer and the imposition of hands (Acts 6:6); missionaries were

appointed by fasting, prayer, and the imposition of hands (Acts 13:3); bishops were appointed by prayer and fasting (Acts 14:23), (but see also Titus 1:5 in which *kathistemi* implies the imposition of hands as in (Acts 6:6); evangelists were appointed by the imposition of hands (1 Tim. 4:14).

“We are not to conclude from these four notices that there were four ways of appointment, one for each class of men. Such a conclusion would make the appointment of evangelists the least solemn and impressive of all. Rather we are to assume that Luke, in his abbreviated record, omitted mentioning one or more items of the ordination service in all but one of his notices. Only in Acts 13:3 does he give a complete list of the actions involved in scriptural appointment.

“Scriptural analogy will help us here. In Luke’s record of conversion he sometimes fails to mention faith, sometimes confession, and sometimes repentance. But we are not to assume that there was a different plan of salvation for the different groups to whom the gospel was taken. Rather we understand that all the items mentioned in all the cases of conversion constitute the plan of salvation. By analogy we must say that all the items mentioned in all the cases of ordination constituted the scriptural method of appointment to office.

“Concerning the facts set forth in the above paragraphs there is practically no disagreement among Bible students. That in the apostolic church men were appointed to office by fasting, prayer, and the imposition of hands is almost universally conceded. But concerning the application of these facts to the conduct of the church in subsequent ages there is wide disagreement. We must therefore make a separate study of that problem.

“Having seen how officers of the church were appointed (ordained) in the apostolic church, we come now to inquire concerning the applicability of that ceremonialism to the church of this age. Were fasting, prayer, and the imposition of hands designed by the Holy Spirit only for the apostolic age, or was that the permanent order by which officers of the church of God were to be set apart to their sacred work? Observation was made

to the effect that our contemporaries are not in agreement on that point. There is a pronounced tendency on the part of some simply to ignore the question. But that will not do. If it is the Lord's will for officers of his church to be appointed in this age as in the age of the apostles, we sin just as grievously if we fail there as if we fail to observe any other of the Lord's commands. And if he did not intend for us to observe such ceremonial appointing we sin presumptuously if we imitate a liturgy not intended for us. In either case many of us are in error and it behooves us to inquire diligently into the Lords' will concerning us." pp. 36-42.

It may be interesting to the reader, at this point, for him to go back and notice the *canon* Brother Franklin set forth earlier in this chapter and see how it applies to these recent scriptures used and the conclusions drawn by him.

#### VARIETIES OF PERSUASIONS

"As a prelude to the further investigation of our subject I would like for us now to list and get clearly before our minds the different attitudes that have been taken toward ordination, by which I mean the appointment to office by fasting, prayer, and the imposition of hands.

1. There are those who believe that in the modern church officers should be appointed as in the days of the apostles, without any addition to or subtraction from the ceremony described in the New Testament.

2. There are those who take an exactly opposite view and hold that officers should enter upon the duties and privileges of their offices without any appointing process whatsoever. According to this view the choosing and appointing processes are combined into one; or, rather, the appointing process is abolished altogether and only the choosing process is retained.

3. Others hold that there should be some kind of appointment made after officers are chosen, but that the process of appointment described in the New Testament is not binding, nor even applicable in this age.

"Now let us notice somewhat more closely what the New Testament says about the laying on of hands. We have several examples of the apostles laying their hands on other persons and imparting the gifts of the Spirit, after which the other persons could perform miracles of healing, speaking in tongues, etc. (See Acts 8:14-17; 19:1-7). But I would have us remember that only the apostles could thus impart the gifts of the Spirit. There is no example in the New Testament of any one else doing such a thing. Moreover we are taught by implication in Acts 8:4-17 that others could not do it. In that section we have the record of Philip preaching in Samaria, where he also cast out unclean spirits and healed the palsied and lame (v. 7). But Philip did not impart that power to others. On the contrary Peter and John were sent to Samaria for that purpose. But I need not argue this point further. It is almost universally conceded that only the apostles could impart the gifts of the Spirit by the imposition of hands, and what is admitted need not be proven.

"Now let us examine the instances of 'appointment' in the New Testament in the light of this admitted principle, that only the apostles could impart the gifts of the Spirit. In Acts 6:1-6 we have the record of the appointment of the first deacons. In this instance the apostles imposed their hands upon the seven. Certainly it was not for the purpose of healing. Was it to impart the gifts of the Spirit? It may or may not have been; we are not told specifically. Some one has suggested that the seven were 'full of the Spirit' before they were chosen. Without stopping to argue what that implies, I would suggest that the seven did not need supernatural powers in order to discharge the duties for which they were chosen. (*That is one reason why your author has contended the laying on of hands was not a necessary part in the appointment of the seven. But we see that these men had the gift of the Spirit which required imposing the apostles' hands and there is no other notice of their hands being imposed upon them. And they progressed beyond serving tables, speaking by inspiration and working miracles.* H. E. W.) All they needed was Christian honesty and a certain amount of business ability. In the

light of that fact I doubt if God gave them powers they did not need for that specific work. When he gave them such powers (either before or afterwards) it was for some other purpose.

"In Acts 14:23 we have the first record of the appointment of bishops. In that case we are not told specifically that hands were imposed, but I think that it will be generally conceded that they were. Was it to impart the gifts of the Spirit? To answer would be only to speculate as we are not told. But I would say, as before, that the duties of bishops as enumerated in 1 Tim. 3, Titus 1, and elsewhere, do not require such supernatural powers. I would observe, too, that in this case an evangelist (Barnabas) as well as an apostle did the appointing.

"Now let us look at Acts 13:1-3. Barnabas and Saul were chosen for a specific work, namely, to be missionaries. In this case the Holy Spirit chose the men, but they were appointed by fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands. There is no question as to what was done on this occasion. Now the question arises, For what purpose was this ceremony, particularly the imposition of hands? I think no one has ever contended that Barnabas and Saul were sick and needed to be healed; that can be dismissed without argument. According to the theory we are examining hands must have been imposed on Barnabas and Saul that they might receive the Holy Spirit. But there are two fatal objections to that conclusion. First: Saul and Barnabas were both already filled with the Holy Spirit (see Acts 9:17 and 11:24). But if some contend that being filled with the Holy Spirit does not always imply the power to work miracles, I shall say, Second: The men who imposed their hands on Barnabas and Saul (namely Symeon, Lucius, and Manaen) were none of them apostles and could not therefore impart the gifts of the Spirit.

"What are we to conclude from these observations? But one conclusion can reasonably and honestly be reached and that is that the ceremony was simply and solely an appointive process and had nothing to do with special gifts. We must admit that there was a third thing for which hands were imposed in the apostolic age (namely, the appointment of officers), or else for-

sake the historical and scriptural position that only apostles could impart the gifts of the Spirit. And if that position is once forsaken we have no scriptural weapon with which to oppose the fanaticism of the divine healing cults of this age.

"Now look at Titus 1:5. Paul told Titus to 'appoint' elders here in every city. We noticed in the last chapter that the Greek word for 'appoint' here is the same as in Acts 6:3. Naturally it carries with it the appointive process, namely, prayer and imposition of hands. But neither was Titus an apostle. Evidently, then, the ceremony used by Titus was purely appointive and had nothing to do with gifts of the Spirit. . . . .

"One other problem I would like to consider. We learn from 1 Tim. 4:14 and 2 Tim. 1:6 that hands were twice imposed on Timothy. In the first instance Paul tells him to 'Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.' In the second instance: 'For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands.' Why were hands thus twice laid on the same man? The answer is not far to seek. We observe that Paul mentions two 'gifts,' one of which he calls the 'gift of God.' The first gift was given by prophecy and the imposition of the hands of the bishops. This refers to the gift of the evangelistic office, for which office he was fitted and qualified by Paul's prophecy (teaching), and into which he was inducted by an appointive ceremony that included the imposition of the hands of the bishops. Paul tells him not to neglect that gift, that is, not to neglect his preaching.

"But what right had these bishops to lay their hands on Timothy other than to appoint him to office? None whatever. They did not lay their hands on him to impart any gifts of the Spirit for that was beyond their power. But, since Timothy occupied so important a position in the primitive church, it was deemed necessary for him to possess the gifts of the Spirit. Therefore he had the 'gift of God' through the laying on of Paul's hands. What the bishops could not give Paul did; what Paul could not give the bishops did.

"We have now examined all the examples of the imposition of hands on church officers recorded in the New Testament. There are six of them. Of these six, four were definitely not for the purpose of imparting the gifts of the Spirit, because the men who imposed hands had not that power. In the other two examples, the men who imposed had the power to impart such gifts, but there is not the slightest indication that they imposed hands in these instances for that purpose. Indeed, it seems certain that they did not in view of the fact that the same ceremony was performed by those apostles. . . . . If imposition of hands must be rejected, prayer must be also rejected if used for appointive purposes.

"Much undignified quibbling has been resorted to by those who have developed a complex against the New Testament appointive process; questions have been asked that are so puerile that one might think they emanate from sectarian sources. But I am passing such quibbling by in silence, as not belonging in a serious and earnest discussion of religious themes. Very briefly I would suggest, however, that when a church is appointing officers the whole congregation would do well to fast and, it should be required of the principals. We are told nothing of the length of the fast, but we all know that if one abstains from one meal he has fasted. A very impressive and solemn ordination ceremony can be conducted at the evening service. The evening meal may be omitted and the sermon may be designed to impress upon officers and other members their mutual duties and obligations. The climax of the service will be reached when the officers-elect reverently kneel while hands are imposed and the dedicatory prayer is offered. (*Should fasting be required I doubt if one meal would suffice.* H. E. W.)

"This question has been often asked: Who shall impose hands upon the officers-elect? In the only New Testament examples we have apostles imposed hands upon deacons, prophets upon missionaries, bishops upon evangelists, and evangelists upon bishops. Since two of these orders have disappeared from the church, we have no certain instructions. Brother Robert Milligan

took the position that any men who had been previously ordained might impose hands. A little reflection convinces us, however, that that conclusion is not valid as it would lead us into an ordinal successional succession, which would differ not at all from the exploded theories of apostolic succession and baptismal succession. May I venture to say that in organized churches evangelists and bishops should probably impose hands; but if the church is not organized it may designate certain members to impose hands in its behalf, just as any member may baptize a penitent sinner.

#### SUMMMARY

- “1. In the primitive church the apostles imposed hands on certain others to impart the gifts of the Spirit.
2. The apostles and those to whom were imparted gifts of the Spirit laid their hands on certain others in order to heal them.
3. The apostles and others appointed chosen men to ecclesiastical office by imposition of hands, accompanied by fasting and prayer.
4. There is no record of fasting and prayer in connection with imposition of hands to heal or to impart gifts of the Spirit.
5. Laying hands on officers-elect was purely a ceremonial appointive process. It had no connection with imposition of hands for imparting gifts of the Spirit as is shown by the following considerations: (a). Hands were imposed on men who doubtless already had supernatural gifts. (b). Hands were imposed by men (in four cases out of six) who had not the power to impart gifts of the Spirit. (c). Hands were twice imposed on the same man; once by bishops as an appointive process; once by an apostle to impart the ‘gift of God.’
6. In no case of imposition of hands on officers is it certain that gifts of the Spirit were imparted; in four cases it is certain they were *not* imparted; in two cases it was possible but not probable.
7. No appointive process, other than that indicated in the New Testament, can be used without resort to human invention.

8. Inasmuch as officers were appointed in the primitive church by fasting, prayer, and the imposition of hands, and inasmuch as it has not been shown that such practice was intended by the Lord for a particular time, people, country, or circumstance, or that its practice in this age is inconsistent with any other truth, it is therefore binding upon the church of all ages."

The above quotations are taken from Brother Franklin's most pointed and clearly defined arguments from page 36 through page 52. It was quite difficult to get a clear understanding of his writing across to my readers without rather extensive quotations as his arguments converged to one focal point from various angles, never finishing with the example being considered at one setting. He has done an excellent job for the adherents of his position. While the author does not adhere to that position I would not discourage a careful study of his entire booklet. I noticed some contradictions, maybe of minor importance, in his writing, which I suppose may appear in all books which are written unaided by superhuman power. With this work from Brother Franklin both sides of this issue are quite clearly presented in this book.

Sister Franklin, after his decease, gave me leave to make the above quotations.

#### WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE?

One more thought may suffice upon the subject at issue in this chapter. Under the Old Testament regime, which was largely ritualistic, with many types and shadows the worshippers were not able to perform those duties with an intelligence enabling them to properly appreciate the design of the Divine Intelligence. Peter thus expressed it: "Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which

now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into" (1 Peter 1:10-12).

But the mysteries to them are now revealed to us: "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which was given me to youward, to fulfil the word of God, even the mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to his saints, to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ" (Colossians 1:25-28).

And the types, shadows, ceremonies and ritualistic performances under the law have no meaning with us after *the perfect law of liberty* has perfected man in Christ. All our worship activities have a meaning we may understand.

We *sing* to praise God for his great love extended to us through Christ.

We *pray* to him through appreciation of what he is to us, thanking him for the good we have and to petition his blessings; in humility, the lesser bowing before the greater.

We *teach* his word, which is his power to save, that others may have fellowship with us in Christ and inherit the promises.

We *eat the Lord's Supper* as a memorial of the sacrifice of himself that we might be redeemed from all iniquity.

We *give of our means* to share our blessings with the poor and have the gospel preached to them in darkness to turn them to light and from Satan to God.

All this rises above the ceremonial or ritualistic and is the highest expression of intelligent appreciation into which man, made in the image of God, is capable of being directed by the aid of the Divine Intelligence.

And after studying both sides of this issue I have been forced to conclude that all meaningless ceremonies and rituals have no place in the adult age of the church of our Lord.

Moreover, while man is yet an alien and in sins he can see some reason for believing and trusting in God and Christ; for repenting, which leads to a reformation of life; for confessing Christ to be God's son which is comparable to an alien taking the oath of allegiance to another form of government, thus declaring to take Christ as his prophet, priest and king, to be governed by his will. Then comes the crucial test of faith, while he stands at the waters' edge asking himself "What is this for? Why get wet this way? How can this take away sins? How can this put me into Christ? etc. Satan puts these doubtings into the minds of men. But strong faith in the heart urges one on in his obedience to his Master.

From a human viewpoint, I must confess, I have never seen one good which may be gained by being baptized. But Christ and the apostles explain that it is God's way for us to get into Christ, into his death where the blood was shed by which we are saved when the contact is made.

But does some one suggest a parallel exists regarding *baptism* and *imposing the hands*? I disagree. God has told us what baptism is for, what it does: It is unto remission of sins; it washes away sins; it saves us; it puts us into Christ—into his death; it is the translating act from one state to another; in it we are buried into the death of Christ and raised to the new life in Christ the Lord. *But aside from imposing the hands for the purposes of healing and imparting the gifts of the Spirit an explanation or reason for laying hands on any one in the post-miraculous age of the New Testament church is wanting.*

Thus leaving the performance standing by itself, without meaning or intelligent significance and strictly ceremonial or ritualistic in its use.

Need more be said? I trow not.

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## THE HOPE THAT URGES ME ON

I DO NOT think that I am losing my mind; but I wonder just to what length the grace and mercy of God will be extended to a poor weak piece of humanity that knew the Master's will.

I love life, enjoy living, and am happy that I chanced to know God's will and obeyed it and rejoice in the hope of the fruition of my soul. If I can only triumph in the survival of the fittest then may I be glad.

Here the beautiful songs we sing, the word we hear preached, and the prayers we pray all mean much to me of course; but to be eternally saved means infinitely more; when I get to where, over me, Satan will have no power. I sorrow and am in mental distress for all those now under his influence.

### I WANT THAT NEW EXISTENCE

Paul expressed it as follows: "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory" (Philippians 3:20, 21).

It is that new body for which I long. Have you suffered in your present body? Do you feel at home in it? Does it not humiliate you? These bodies of ours have already begun to decay.

God promises us other bodies. So we have assurance of living again in bodies like Christ's glorious body; free from humiliation, pain, deterioration, and final corruption. It will be an eternal lease on *life*. A new life in a body like Christ's with an eternity in which to enjoy that body, this, to me is *salvation*.

God's grace gave me a good body with mental power; but sin rendered these violate. But he has redeemed my body and

offers me a superior body beyond my power to comprehend: for "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be." But "We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). That body will be capable of eternal enjoyment—eternal life.

Here I try to live . . . . but am dying.

Here I try to rest . . . . but weariness is my lot.

Here I try to sing . . . . but my voice is not perfect.

Here I try to love . . . . but my love is unrequited.

Here I try to worship God . . . . but other things enter my mind.

Nothing satisfies. What we do is imperfect.

Here I eat and try to be satisfied . . . . but I hunger again.

Here I eat in the sweat of my brow . . . . but in heaven they weary not.

Here I eat the fruit of my own labor . . . . but up there they eat of "The Tree of Life" and "The hidden Manna" (Revelation 2:7, 17).

Here I clothe myself with hard earned money—but over there White Robes will be given me (Revelation 7:9).

Here we toil and tire . . . . but over there ever toiling and never tire.

Here we sorrow . . . . Over there rejoice (Revelation 19:7).

Here we weep . . . . Over there all tears wiped away (Revelation 7:17).

Here we believe . . . . Over there we shall know him (Revelation 2:23).

Here we suffer . . . . Over there no more pain (Revelation 21:4).

Here we die . . . . Over there, will live forever (John 6:51).

I want to hear the voice of the "last trump" calling me forth.

#### TO WHAT?

To live again. To see again. To eat again. To laugh again.

To move again. To love again. To be loved again. To rejoice again—in a body that will know no limitation in ecstasy. That will be Rest and Peace with God.

Oh, that word *Life*... To live again and that on and on forever.

That is what heaven means to me—to *live again*.

Brother, Sister, don't you want to go there?

But for all these things this book could offer no adequate excuse for its existence. But knowing that God holds every one: preacher, elder, deacon, and member responsible for the proper use of their respective talents, or ability, I write these words to admonish you to active service in His vineyard.

If these thirty years spent in the preparation of this book will assist some soul to a greater appreciation in the use of his capacities in the service of the Master to the end of the way that

the grace of God might be more abundantly bestowed upon him in *that day then* I will rest in hope and at last will I be glad.

Tears well up in my eyes as I write these last words of warning and hope. Wondering if I have said the right thing in the right way. And if I have said all that should or may be said. Oh, if I only knew what more to say!

I close thusly:

“Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live honorably in all things. And I exhort you the more exceedingly to do this, . . . . Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13: 18-21).

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#### CROSSING THE BAR

*Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no mourning at the bar,  
When I put out to sea.*

*But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.*

*Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark.*

*For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my pilot face to face  
When I have crossed the bar.*

—Alfred Lord Tennyson

## THE SEVEN GREATEST THINGS ON EARTH

Reading Ephesians 5:22-33

THE FOLLOWING sermon outline is not all original with me. A few years ago I exchanged some outlines with a brother whom I knew only through correspondence and he sent me the general outline of this sermon. I then rearranged and added some of my own thoughts to get it attuned to my own individuality of presentation. Many times I have been asked for a copy of this sermon and in as much as the outline carries such possibilities for branching out into many sermons I use this means of putting it into the hands of our young preachers. And there are some of us older preachers who will also appreciate the arrangement. The outline follows:

### THE SEVEN GREATEST THINGS ON EARTH

INTRO. Not the seven wonders of the world. The greatest things in the world are not of the world.

#### 1. THE SOUL IS THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD

*Soul:* The immortal spirit, Spirit of man. Life. The intellectual principle, etc. The gift of God (Eccl. 12:7; Acts 17:28; Heb. 12:9).

Of eternal nature (Rev. 6:9; Matt. 10:28).

What would you give for it? (Matt. 16:26. Christ died for it. Worth more than all the world (See Jas. 1:21; 5:20).

#### 2. SIN IS THE GREATEST EVIL IN THE WORLD

Indeed it is the only evil. All sin is evil and all evil is sin. It separates from God (Isa. 59:2; Gen. 3:1).

It is the source of all suffering, misery, pain and death.

Our sins will find us out (Num. 32:23). (Chickens come home to roost)

3. THE GOSPEL IS THE GREATEST POWER IN THE WORLD  
It enlightens, civilizes, and saves the soul (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Heb. 6:4-6).
4. LOVE IS THE GREATEST PRINCIPLE IN THE WORLD  
John 3:16; I Cor. 13:1; I John 4:8, 18; Col. 3:14.
5. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST—GREATEST REMEDY IN THE WORLD  
I John 1:7; Heb. 9:12-14; Rom. 5:8, 9. And others.
6. THE LORD'S SUPPER—GREATEST MONUMENT IN THE WORLD  
Matt. 26:26-28; I Cor. 10:16; 11:20-34; Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25.
7. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD  
Eph. 5:23-27; Acts 20:28. Purchased at great cost.  
The church in its local and general sense.  
It is the House of God. The Home of the saved.  
The Salt of the earth and the Light of the world.

No one who is a member of the church of Christ in its broad sense or in its local sense has any need of being a member of any other institution of a religious kind, in order to his usefulness or happiness in this life or in the life to come.

We cannot afford to say or do anything that will in any sense disparage or minimize the Church of the Living God. We cannot concede that the church is a failuer in any sense regarding the divine side. All failure is on the part of humanity. It is God's divinely appointed means and is all-sufficient for all his purposes, of its appointments.

Think of the apostles of our Lord going about from city to city organizing societies other than the divinely organized Church of the Living God!

THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD IS:  
SOCIETY enough for us to have fellowship in  
HOUSE enough for us to live in  
TEMPLE enough for us to worship in  
VINEYARD enough for us to labor in  
ARMY enough for us to fight in

Young man, The church is a divine Y.M.C.A.

Young lady, The church is a divine Y.W.C.A., C.W.B.M., or W.C.T.U.  
Christian, The church is a divine Missionary Society.  
If anything is lacking then the church is too small.

It has the greatest	Author	—Christ
It contains the greatest	Monument	—The Supper
Offers the greatest	Remedy	—The Blood
Preaches the greatest	Power	—The Gosepl
To remove the greatest	Curse	—Sin
To save the greatest	Thing	—The Soul
And secures the greatest	HOME	—HEAVEN

## EXULTATION

“I love thy church, O God,  
Her walls before thee stand,  
Dear as the apple of thine eye,  
And graven on thy hand.

“For her my tears shall fall,  
For her my prayers ascend,  
To her my cares and toils be  
given,  
Till toils and cares shall end.”

“You may sing of the beauties,  
Of mountain and dale,  
Of the silvery streamlets,  
And flowers of the Vale.

“But the place most delightful,  
This earth can afford,  
Is the place of devotion,  
The House of the Lord.”

David said: “I was glad when they said unto me,  
Let us go unto the house of Jehovah” (Psalm 122:1).

See Revelation 21: 1-8. In Heaven, Home Forever. Where the sun never sets. And Youth and Springtime lasts forever.

And we evermore shall breathe the fragrance of the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley and rest in peace at HOME.

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FINIS

*I've been reading, studying and searching 'round  
My way through this material  
To wend,  
And now I am able the word to sound  
That I have finally come to*

*THE END.*

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